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The Nation.
May 10, 1980 $1

EDITORIAL

THE WRONG RESIGNATION

In a responsible political system, the resignation would have been that of the military, not the diplomatic, Cabinet officer—or of the head of the Government. But in America, in this election year, it was Cyrus Vance, the only member of the inner circle who was right, who had to quit. Harold Brown and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who sponsored and presided over an operation that could have been truly calamitous, kept their jobs. Each man discussed the debacle as if he were the Secretary of State. And Jimmy Carter, the Commander in Chief, sailed above it all on a cloud of patriotic pieties.

The question right now is not how to punish the Carter Administration but how to control the American Government. The allies have acted hastily to support Carter on Iran lest he behave like Nixon's "madman" and do worse. Better bi-, tri-, or multi-lateralism than frantic unilateral force in the Persian Gulf. The allies know that if Carter now blockades Iran, Iran can mine the Strait of Hormuz. Then Arabian oil stops and war begins. That is the probability we should all recognize and fear, as the world does.

The fiasco of the "rescue" attempt increases the danger of another spasm of American action unless pressures are immediately brought to bear on candidate Carter and on Congress. In primary and caucus votes and in every other kind of message the public can send, Carter must be told to stop it. Congress must rally behind the War Powers Resolution and extend its reach to check this unleashed President.

Carter should be made to realize that force will not work against a Government like Iran's, which can barely function in an atmosphere of passionate revolutionary turmoil. Washington is the seat of a Government in chaos. President Carter did much to make it that way. Can he still learn or be taught the limits of power?

AMERICAN BOOK AWARDS
Calvin Trillin
Herbert J. Gans
Thomas Powers

BATTLE OF THE BUDGET
Thomas B. Edsall

CITIZENS' PARTY
Derek Shearer
Richard J. Walton

BLACK HILLS WHITEWASH
Jill Norgren & Petra T. Shattuck

LIBERIA'S COUP
Stephen Talbot

GOSPEL BLUES
Anthony Heilbut

POLITICAL EUROVISION

EUROPE TURNS TO AUTONOMY

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

Washington

Having been told that if they decided upon economic sanctions against Iran, the United States would take no military action in the near future, the West European governments woke on Friday morning, April 25, to news of the unsuccessful American mission to Iran. *Le Monde* promptly termed the episode "a poor man's Bay of Pigs." Now the Europeans have to deal with the resignation of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, for many of them the last rational man in our Administration. At the weekend Luxembourg meeting of heads of government, the Europeans decided to maintain the sanctions. Unofficially, it was explained that they feared that President Carter and Zbigniew Brzezinski might lose their heads completely. A timely leak from the Pentagon suggested that we could improve our military capacity elsewhere by withdrawing most of our forces from Western Europe. This may have been intended to frighten the Europeans, but at this point it is more likely to reassure them.

A visiting member of the House of Representatives recently asked his German hosts at a dinner party in Bonn: "What are you prepared to do for us in the next ten days?" The exemplary vulgarity of the question will surprise only those who are unaware that the essential spiritual traits of our recent diplomacy in Western Europe have been limitless self-righteousness and fathomless provincialism. American academics, journalists and officials—when confronting Europe and the Europeans—too often behave like caricatures. I recently attended a seminar in Washington at

(Continued on Page 561)

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LETTERS.

TOWERS IN THE DESERT

New York City

It gives me much pleasure to be able to applaud two *Nation* editorials, which stand out from the pack like towers in the desert.

I refer to "War Presidency," in your issue of February 16, and "The Corruptors" ("Corrupters"?), in that of March 1.

The former says what has long needed to be said in your pages about our current heir to the rather mottled mantle of Richard Nixon, who declares as he did that "war is peace," from the thorny security of his Rose Garden. The second at least partially redeems the rather asinine comments on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's "Abscam" operation in the previous issue. Rather late, but absolutely necessary.

However, I cannot help but wonder, after the recent antics and zigzags, about possible schizophrenia in your editorial department. Let us, please, have more paragraphs by the author of "War Presidency" and "The Corrupters" (I insist on proper spelling!), and less by whoever it was that wrote otherwise. *The Nation* never used to be a forum for editorial Jekylls and Hydes.

James Storrow

A FEW WORDS

Washington

I read with interest Herbert G. Gutman's article "Black History Seduced and Abandoned" [*The Nation*, Sept. 22, 1979] and the subsequent letters of Nathan Glazer and Gutman [*The Nation*, Feb. 2]. As a historian of the Afro-American experience, I would like to add a few words to the debate.

First let me say that I think Gutman's *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (1976) is an important contribution to black history, and aids in the understanding of black institutional life. The present plight of the black urban poor must be viewed in its historic context, including the public policy which inadvertently created the present deterioration of urban life. Because, as Gutman shows, racism in slavery was not sufficient to destroy all black institutions, it does not mean that today these institutions are not threatened or more threatened.

These inadvertent results came from a lack of public understanding of the way Afro-American institutions developed. When Africans were enslaved and transported to these shores, they left their homelands behind, but not their culture or cosmology. While substantial changes in African culture took place within the slave quarters, the African core culture remained and upon it was built an African-American culture. Social institutions were formed, of which the family was the most critical. In addition to the resilience of Afro-Americans, the slave system itself encouraged strong family ties, but for purely economic reasons: strong family ties discouraged slaves from running away, and increased the slave population while reducing friction within the slave quarters.

Following slavery, blacks quickly developed their social institutions, which were rooted in slavery, namely the family, the church and the school. For generations, these institutions served, reinforced, supported and protected individual blacks in a racist society. What I suggest and propose for further research by sociologists and anthropologists is that the destruction of these basic social institutions in the urban ghetto is the reason why the social fabric of ghetto life is breaking apart. When one understands the naïveté of the slave system and the nature of racism in that system, one can see how social institutions were used to assure social stability. In a capitalist society, racism led to the use of blacks as a labor reservoir with no thought given to what impact uprooting them would have on the stability of Afro-American institutions.

We need to re-evaluate the issue of black survival, as Samuel F. Yette suggested in *The Choice* (1971). Whereas in slavery the slave family had at least an economic claim on the slavemaster, today the nation does not acknowledge any claim on its resources by ghetto blacks. Otherwise, why does the country tolerate a black unemployment rate more than twice as high as the national average? For black youth the rate reaches as high as 60 percent in some ghetto areas. Even during the Depression years national unemployment did not exceed 25 percent. As a group, black people cannot tolerate public policy that makes its youth obsolete.

The welfare system is an example of how public policy has inadvertently worked to destroy the family. While designed to provide blacks with the minimum essentials for existence, the welfare system is so structured that it is in itself destructive of the black family. The public policy regarding the black family which the Moynihan Report generated came about due to the failure of policy makers to understand black institutional life. The result has been the development of public programs that by their very nature threaten nontraditional, nonwhite institutions, including the black family. The end product is that black youth are socialized in the street where they learn antisocial behavior because it is through antisocial behavior that this society inadvertently rewards black youth.

If the nation cannot bring itself to incorporate blacks into the mainstream of American society, the least that it can do is support in a positive manner black institutions. This includes the black family and especially black schools and colleges which have traditionally provided black leadership. *John E. Fleming*
Senior Fellow (History)
Institute for the Study of Educational Policy

ERRED IN AWARD

Washington

Without passing judgment on your scorn for Senator William Proxmire's conduct, I think *The Nation* erred in juxtaposing his activities and our bloated defense budget ["Sounding Brass Award," April 5]. There is hardly a more articulate and consistent critic of Pentagon spending on Capitol Hill than Senator Proxmire. *Max Holland*

AUTHOR'S REQUEST

With the authorization of his estate, I am preparing a collection of Raymond Chandler's letters for publication by the Columbia University Press. I should appreciate hearing from those who have letters that might be included in this collection. *Frank MacShane*
404 Dodge
Columbia University
New York, N.Y. 10027

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EDITORIALS.

Upping the Ante

Jimmy Carter knew when he approved the ill-fated military expedition into Iran that, whatever the outcome, it would mean the loss of his Secretary of State. That the President was willing to suffer the political wounds of Cyrus Vance's principled resignation is a remarkable indication of just how close to war our nation has come in the last six months.

Carter's initial military gamble failed—but the larger danger is that the Administration could become locked into a policy of graduated escalation as Lyndon Johnson did following the Gulf of Tonkin affair. The rival power centers in what remains of the revolutionary Government in Teheran might be unable to agree on the release of the hostages whatever the military threats. In a few weeks or months, as it is driven home to the American electorate that we are in for a much longer siege, Carter might then be tempted, if not compelled, to up the ante. Another military operation, probably the mining of Iranian harbors, would become a pressing option.

It is precisely this scenario that precipitated Vance's resignation. Vance, of course, is no pacifist. But his objection to the use of military force in the Persian Gulf region is grounded in simple common sense. Any military intervention against an oil-producing nation will have untold ramifications throughout the Middle East. The mining of Iranian harbors could lead to the interdiction of all Persian Gulf oil—and not just Iranian oil. President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr has stated that a U.S. blockade would be met by the mining of the Strait of Hormuz. Moreover, Saudi oil chief Sheik Ahmad Zaki Yamani has separately confirmed that the Iranians do indeed have the capability of mining the strait, and would do so in the event of a blockade.

Throughout the hostage crisis, the Saudis have urged restraint on the United States. They officially expressed

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"regret and concern" over the aborted military operation. The specter of foreign intervention against fellow Moslems—including such "renegade" Moslems as the Ayatollah Khomeini and his band of Shiite radicals—sets too unsettling a precedent even for the conservative Saudis. Riyadh's own domestic stability is now heavily dependent on its ability not to become too closely associated with "Western imperialism." Indeed, the Saudis' response to an American-Iranian military confrontation in the Persian Gulf could be simply to shut down oil production for the duration of the crisis.

Nor should violent reactions by the volatile Arab and Islamic masses be discounted. After all, only a few short months ago, mobs sacked American embassies in Pakistan and Libya in response to a false allegation of American involvement in the terrorist takeover of the Grand Mosque of Mecca. Already there have been riots in Bahrain to protest the use of that island nation as a refueling base by the C-130s involved in the hostage rescue mission.

The stakes are thus quite high—too high to justify the risks associated with any military action against Iran. When Carter adopted a policy of military escalation in full disregard of the larger geopolitical risks, Vance, the quintessential "team player," could associate himself no longer with an Administration on such a disastrous course. Can it be that in the pursuit of his re-election, Carter is now prepared to sacrifice the lives of fifty-three American hostages and lead us to a war in the Persian Gulf?

Analogies to 1914 are depressingly apt. Events are in the saddle, and ineffectual leaders like Jimmy Carter can be driven to lash out in a desperate attempt to reassert a semblance of control. By one of those coincidences history yields up, the last Secretary of State to resign in protest, William Jennings Bryan, broke with Woodrow Wilson in 1915, charging that the President was drawing the country into world war. It could happen again.

Back to the U.N.!

Overlooked in the latest phase of the furor over Iran is the fact that Secretary General Kurt Waldheim has taken the first steps toward sending the United Nations' Inquiry Commission back to Iran. After getting informal but unanimous approval from the Security Council last February, Waldheim set up the board as "a fact-finding commission to hear Iran's grievances and to allow for an early solution of the crisis between Iran and the United States." The mission was aborted not by a mechanical failure but by overloading. At the urging of the White House, President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr authorized Waldheim to announce that "Iran desires to have the commission speak to each of the hostages." But neither the militants at the embassy nor Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini were a party to this agreement. Unable to carry out this second task (later handled more appropriately by the Red Cross), the commission abandoned its primary assignment and flew back to New York.

The Secretary General's cautious initiative to revive the panel is reported to have been approved by the American representative at the United Nations. But, as Waldheim says, it will "take a while before the dust settles down" and the commission can return to Iran. During this brief while, a lot depends upon whether President Carter is willing to support in the spring a mission he had reluctantly assented to last winter. The return of the U.N. fact-finding mission to Teheran, it must be emphasized, would help promote a shift from the deadly spiral of confrontation-sanctions-intervention-blockade-war to the tiresome, but peaceful, path of negotiation and conciliation. That path proved successful in winning the release of the hostages in Bogotá last week. If resolutely followed, it might conceivably help effect the release of the American hostages in Teheran too. The new Secretary of State, Edmund Muskie, could make an enormous contribution toward this—and also signal a return by the Carter Administration to its earlier policy of abjuring rough stuff in its relations with both the Third World and the Soviet Union.

But let's be realistic about "fact-finding" in world affairs. "A fact," a brilliant journalist named Bliss Carman pointed out back in 1906 in *The Atlantic Monthly*, "merely marks the point where we have agreed to let the investigation cease." No fact-finding on "Iran's grievances" is worthy of the Security Council's attention if it merely catalogues complaints by self-selected Iranian activists. The U.N. Commission has to do some investigating of its own. In early February, when asked how long the mission would take if he were in charge of it, a high-level U.N. official replied off the record, "At least three months." Moreover, many U.N. people hoped that the commission would not limit itself to Teheran but would also convene in other locales (as previous U.N. missions of this kind have done) and would seek other versions of the facts from Iranian refugees, including the former Shah or his representatives.

It was this kind of fact-finding by the Truman committee in its investigation of the war effort during World War II that vaulted Harry Truman from the Senate to the Vice Presidency. We hope this tradition will be remembered by Muskie as he moves from Senate to State Department. Better yet, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee might be encouraged to conduct its own probe covering the entire record of U.S.-Iranian relations over the past thirty years. A few weeks ago, with some support from Cyrus Vance, the committee's chairman, Senator Frank Church, asked his staff to prepare a "white paper" on this subject. This effort could be considered a mission also, a mission to retrieve—or strengthen—America's honor by showing the world that we are a country unafraid to face up to facts. Any staff paper could be the starting point for informed

EMENDATION

The publisher of Edward W. Said's book, *Literature and Society*, is Johns Hopkins University Press, not Harvard University Press as stated in last week's issue.

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Senate hearings on policy matters that require much more public attention and debate than they have been receiving.

Given the present confusions in American foreign policy and the much greater chaos in Iran, there is no guarantee whatsoever that fact-finding missions—whether by the United Nations, the U.S. Senate, or both—will resolve the issue. Indeed, many other steps might be needed, including: (*1*) abdication by the former Shah on behalf of his heirs as well as himself; (*2*) a reiteration in more authoritative terms of U.S. Ambassador Donald McHenry's now-forgotten statement that the United States would never again intervene in determining the nature of the Iranian Government (along the lines of President Kennedy's nonintervention pledge which helped end the Cuban missile crisis), and (*3*) some simple human sympathy by high-level American officials for those Iranians who cannot forget the imprisonment, torture and murder inflicted by the former Shah's Savak during almost three decades of unforgettable despotism. (See Gross, "Iranian Package," *The Nation*, February 16.)

If Waldheim succeeds in getting the U.N. Inquiry Commission back to Iran in another few weeks, he will have started a highly ceremonial process: commission hearings, commission executive sessions, reports to the Security Council, council deliberations and the like. This would not be a "ceremony of innocence" (to use Yeats's phrase) but of sophistication. Behind the tortuous efforts to knit half-truths and partial truths into a "whole truth," there will be both opportunity and necessity for negotiation, compromise and, above all, better communication on all sides. At best, it could help stem, again in Yeats's words, "the blood-red tide." At worst, it would provide a little more of the truth to a world grown weary of cover-ups. BERTRAM GROSS

Bertram Gross is Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at Hunter College. His award-winning The Legislative Struggle *has just been reprinted by Greenwood Press. His latest book,* Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America, *will be published by M. Evans in June.*

Statutory Rape?

One of the most disturbing aspects of the reaction to President Carter's ignominious Iranian intervention is the cavalier attitude the Administration, its defenders and even some of its critics have taken toward the War Powers Resolution. The imperial Presidency, it seems, still lives.

Passed in the aftermath of Vietnam, over President Richard Nixon's veto, the War Powers Resolution states in part that "the President in every possible instance shall consult with Congress before introducing United States armed forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances." These words seem clearly applicable to the recent misadventure on their face. But on April 27 the President in a message to Congress implied that the statute did not apply to his ill-fated military maneuver because it was a humanitarian rescue operation rather than a hostile attack on Iran. Even Senator Robert Byrd, the majority leader, who is reported to be upset about the President's failure to consult Congress, has endorsed this view. "The verbiage can be argued," *The Washington Post* quotes him, "but in spirit and intent I don't think there was [*sic*] any violations."

Byrd's opinion that the requirements of the War Powers Resolution raise merely semantic issues of "verbiage" is not unique. *The Post* itself, in an editorial entitled "Good Try" (April 26), announced that the issue of consultation should be regarded "in a realistic way," "realism" here as usual being a euphemism for ignoring the clear language of a statute. Turning the tables, *The Post* asked how seriously Congress takes the President's obligation, "whatever it precisely is," since the Senate Foreign Relations Committee waited until the eve of the mission to request consultation. "It was not much of a performance," *The Post* concluded, curiously blaming the consultee for the failure of the consultor to follow the law.

The New York Times was no better. "The rescue operation was certainly military in that it involved soldiers and foreseeable combat," it shrewdly observed in its editorial of April 27. But then it added: "We do not find it hard to distinguish between a rescue and truly aggressive military action," as though the War Powers Resolution required only contemplated military actions that are "truly aggressive" to be reported to Congress in advance. When was the last time an American President has admitted to embarking on a "truly aggressive" military action? Certainly not Lyndon Johnson after the Gulf of Tonkin or Nixon with his incursions. Even Jefferson Davis regarded the bombardment of Fort Sumter as defensive. This rescue attempt easily could have involved us in war with Iran. Just how bloodless could the "extraction" of fifty well-guarded hostages from the American Embassy have been? Would the much-rumored anesthetic gas have totally immobilized their captors? What if the rescuers had been trapped in the embassy compound? How would they have been "extracted"? Air strikes and gunships? The operation seems to be precisely the sort of action Congress should be informed about in advance if its constitutional power to declare war is not to deteriorate into ratifying Presidential adventures after the fact.

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SECRETARY MUSKIE

The appointment of Edmund Muskie as Secretary of State is shrewdly calculated to soothe nervous-Nellie allies, enlist Congressional support on the eve of an inquiry into the rescue operation and emplace a strong political figure in a beleaguered office. Yet Muskie, a bureaucratic neophyte, confronts a Brzezinski in the ascendant. He says he was assured by the President that he will be "the foreign policy spokesman." We hope we're wrong, but that sounds like the job description of Hodding Carter.

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VARIATIONS

CALVIN TRILLIN

In view of the controversy in the literary world over a new set of book awards (see Herbert J. Gans and Thomas Powers's articles, beginning on page 568), we print Calvin Trillin a week ahead of schedule. Carey McWilliams will appear next week. —*The Editors*

For this reviewer, the tone of last night's historic television first—the first time the National Literary Awards were presented as a prime-time network program, in the manner of the film industry's Oscar ceremonies—was set by one of the early winners, Martin McCaffery, who won his "Swifty" for Best Non-Jewish First Novel with No Sex Below the Waist. Standing at the podium, his designer jeans and fisherman's sweater in stark contrast to the tuxedo of the presenter, Joe Namath, McCaffery grabbed the Swifty statuette firmly, leaned into the microphone, and said, "It is certainly no thanks to my rotten, chintzy, incompetent publisher that I am here tonight." Unlike the Oscar ceremonies, which have become notorious for speeches thanking long lists of associates and family and friends, the Swifty awards were remarkable in that not one winner thanked anybody for anything—although one presenter, apparently under the impression that the microphone was not on, was overheard to say, "Thank God, at least they didn't get Capote to M.C."

The negotiations breakthrough that made last night's ceremonies possible, of course, came last month when those writers who had insisted that the selection of winners be done by people they were accustomed to being judged by agreed to an awards selection committee composed of the maître d' at Elaine's, the director of admissions for the Dalton School, the senior counterman at Zabar's and the head of the co-op apartment division of Helmsley-Spear Real Estate. That agreement came after another group of Manhattan writers who insisted that they be judged only by their peers had split into warring factions over whether a writer who lives on the West Side can be considered the peer of a writer who lives on the East Side. ("If anyone can just waltz in from Amsterdam Avenue," said a novelist of manners who took the negative position, "literature has no meaning.")

As someone whose experience has been basically as a West Coast producer of television specials (the Oscar ceremonies twice, "Dumb People," "The Pope at Caesar's Palace"), Grant LaRue, the man selected to produce the Swifties, could hardly have been expected to know what sort of difficulties would flow from his decision to have each presenter given a sealed envelope at the podium by a literary agent from I.C.M. Anyone familiar with the literary world could have predicted that the presenters would demand the right to correct the spelling or grammar on the envelopes before opening them, although it was less predictable that I.C.M. would retain 10 percent of the envelopes as a commission. Contrary to the impression left by Beau Freidberg in accepting the award for Best-Selling Diet Book by a Truly Fat Person, by the way, the initials I.C.M. do not stand for Incessantly Conniving Mamzers.

Mr. LaRue has been fairly criticized for leaning too heavily on Hollywood personalities as presenters, even though Bo Derek did handle the presentation of the poetry and translation awards with surprising good taste. Certainly there was embarrassment all around when Alan King, who arrived at the auditorium at the last minute with what turned out to have been inadequate or mistaken briefing, made it clear from his speech that he believed himself to be addressing a banquet of the Leatherwear Division of the United Jewish Appeal. After viewing last night's program, it seems less fair to criticize Mr. LaRue for recruiting dancers and singers from the entertainment industry for the large production numbers that have become his trademark at such ceremonies—although it was obviously undiplomatic of him to tell an interviewer that writers were not appropriate for such numbers because "a terminal klutziness rages rampant among them." One can only admire Norman Mailer's spunkiness in insisting that at least one writer be represented in one of the production numbers, but as the lead dancer in the "Everything Was Beautiful at the Ballet" number from *A Chorus Line*, Mr. Mailer was simply out of his depth.

This viewer came away from the set last night convinced that the organizers of the National Literary Awards had been quite unfair in characterizing as "elitist" the contention of some writers' organizations that it would be inappropriate to include in a literary awards ceremony an award for Best Catering of a Publication Party. Even if giving one award in such a field was appropriate, giving two—one for hot hors d'oeuvres and one for cold—certainly was not. All in all, the fears voiced by some writers that the ceremony's organizers would lose all restraint once they wandered away from the strictly literary seemed justified by some of the awards given last night. Was it really necessary to give an award for Most Expensive Publisher's Lunch? It is understandable that the awards organizers, people whose business it is to promote and sell books, might want to give an award for Best Blurb, but why an award for Most Blurbs and a separate award for Best Blurb for the Book of a Complete Stranger? Why an award for Best Promotional Talkshow Appearance by a Practicing Psychiatrist?

Also justified, as it turns out, were the fears expressed about whether a major awards ceremony could be managed by an industry that, as Martin McCaffery said in his rather mean-spirited acceptance speech, "is pushed to the limits of its logistical capabilities trying to get ten copies of a thin novel from the warehouse to the Fifth Avenue Brentano's." Whatever argument can be made for or against giving as part of a literary ceremony an award for Best Home Repair Manual in Oversized Paperback, some organizational confusion was obvious the moment the presenter of that award opened the envelope and read out the name of Isaac Bashevis Singer.

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The Times's editorial acknowledged that the President's failure to consult Congress was troubling, but it stated that "what makes the question resound is not legality" but his poor political judgment. Charles Mohr made the same point in his *New York Times Week in Review* piece the same day. "If Mr. Carter is compelled to pay a penalty for the failure of the rescue mission," Mohr predicted, "it is not likely to arise out of a legalistic argument over the [War Powers] Resolution."

Even after Watergate, in short, there is widespread reluctance to regard the President as bound by law. The words in the War Powers Resolution are plain, but in this case the President has successfully wrapped himself in imperial trappings and, like Humpty Dumpty, commanded them to mean whatever he wants.

ARTICLES.

LIBERALS UNBALANCED

The Battle of The Budget

THOMAS B. EDSALL

The decision of Democratic Congressional leaders to adopt a balanced budget for 1981 reflects a recent major shift in American politics, the emergence of a politics of scarcity, replacing what has been a three-decade-long assumption of continued growth and abundance. Signs of this shift have grown more evident since the Vietnam War ended and OPEC imposed its oil embargo in 1973. Yet as push comes to shove in the halls of Congress, the Democratic Party has shown that it is ill-equipped for the escalating legislative battle for the Federal dollar and the Federal tax break. As a result, Democrats face the prospect of an increasingly divided party, as factions on the left, particularly organized labor and blacks, disassociate themselves from the majority. Republicans, for their part, are placed in the quandary of whether to accept what amounts to their own fiscal policy offered by the majority party or to demand additional concessions and champion a more stringent—but certifiably Republican—austerity.

As the debate in Congress shifts from the relatively peaceful arguments over the cutting up of a growing pie to a bitter fight over which groups will be forced to take smaller shares, the Democratic majority is being threatened on at least three fronts: (*1*) the business community, which is far better prepared not only to protect its interests but to capitalize on the situation than organized labor, blacks or any current coalition on the left; (*2*) advocates of increased defense spending, who have won the day politically, and (*3*) the Democrats' own leadership, which is unable to devise a strategy of austerity that protects the party's traditional constituencies—a failing that is working to undermine, if not to eliminate, the fragile resurgence of a partisan loyalty during the past year in the House of Representatives.

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Throughout the last six years, the business community has displayed an extraordinary array of political skills, moving from a post-Watergate nadir to a peak of influence from which it now, in effect, dictates the nation's tax laws. Business has also demonstrated an ability to block Democratic social initiatives—labor law reform, consumer protection, Election Day registration, common situs picketing. On top of that, it is effectively pushing for a major rollback in the powers of the Federal Trade Commission, the one Federal agency with a combined mission of insuring competition in the marketplace and protecting the consumer, and mounting a substantial attack on the Occupational Health and Safety Administration.

This business resurgence stemmed from an astute recognition of the important changes that have recently taken place in the structure of Congress, in Federal election law, in the techniques of winning Congressional elections and in the importance of having intellectual and academic endorsement of economically advantageous positions.

The large majority of members of Congress are no longer allied with any political organization. While theoretically this may increase the independence of each Congressman, in actuality it has eliminated a source of dependable electoral support which had encouraged greater voting independence. To capitalize on the re-election anxieties and hypersensitivity to murmurs of discontent from constituents that members of Congress now feel because of their enhanced vulnerability, the business community has turned to "grass-roots" lobbying and has made it a computerized science. National groups like the Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Businessmen have developed smoothly operating machinery that will generate mail and personal lobbying on behalf of member businesses affected by specific legislation, whether it be restaurant owners worried about higher minimum wages or nonunion contractors in need of Davis-Bacon repeal, all targeted with pinpoint accuracy on undecided, swing-vote members of key subcommittees. Similarly, corporations tap constituencies of management-level personnel and stockholders for protests against impending legislation that management has flagged as harmful.

The Federal election "reforms" of 1974 not only spawned a plethora of corporate political action committees, they also altered the fundamental motivation behind political contributions. The old system encouraged businessmen to contribute to advance their own competitive position against other businesses; thus the host of corporate donors to President Nixon's Committee to Re-Elect the President sought

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favorable treatment in tax, antitrust or regulatory proceedings. But P.A.C. contributions encourage business to act as a class, exerting combined financial leverage on Congress to win a lower capital gains rate, for example, or to weaken the subpoena power of the Federal Trade Commission or to exempt most industries from OSHA inspections. Of all the institutions in the United States, the corporation is the one most ideally suited to use the political action committee as a vehicle to raise money. Establishing a committee is an act of company policy and members of management know that their financial contribution goes with the job—and the corporation will be happy to arrange a convenient system of payroll deductions.

The original impetus behind the revitalization of the business community was a pervasive fear that the corporate scandals growing out of the Watergate proceedings and the major gains by Democrats in the 1974 elections would achieve just what George Meany was calling for, a "veto-proof Congress." As Bryce Harlow, former special counsel to President Nixon and, at that time, a key strategist for business interests in his capacity as lobbyist for Procter and Gamble, recalled, "The danger had suddenly escalated." Similarly, Jeffrey Joseph, head of the Chamber of Commerce's regulatory division, said, "Even under Nixon and Ford we had seen the creation of OSHA, E.P.A. [the Environmental Protection Agency] and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. We didn't know what to expect next."

As it turned out, however, the Democratic Party, particularly in Congress, failed to revive as a coherent force. Although the divisions created by the civil rights and antiwar movements had begun to heal, a new split emerged. The new Democrats elected in 1974 and 1976 represented largely white middle-class suburban districts. Their interest lay less with substantive legislation than with procedural reform of Congress. These reforms coalesced into a concerted attack on the institutional power of committee chairmen through such measures as requiring their election by the full caucus, diffusing authority through the establishment of semiautonomous subcommittees and restricting the ability to horse-trade by requiring open sessions and recorded votes. For the junior members, many very aggressive and very bright, procedural reform was the route to quick prominence; seniority was a liability and solid results could be achieved by a freshman or sophomore.

But when it came to substantive legislation, the reformer-old-guard conflict served to maintain splits within the party. The old guard was no longer the collection of Southern conservatives who had used their power to prevent legislation from going to the floor. Instead, the committee chairmanships were in the process of shifting to a generation of politicians with ties to organized labor, many of whom represented urban, or Northern, or both, constituencies: on Judiciary, Peter Rodino Jr. of Newark; on Rules, Richard Bolling of Kansas City; on Interior and Insular Affairs, Morris Udall of Tucson; on House Administration, Frank Thompson Jr. of Trenton. The accession to power of these chairmen closely coincided with the replacement in 1977 of Carl Albert by Thomas (Tip) O'Neill Jr. as Speaker, a shift that marked the high tide of Northern, big-city dominance, which, as the 1980 census produces a shift in power in the House to the Sunbelt and to the suburbs, will soon begin to recede.

The pre-eminence of the reform issue, coupled with the legislative incompetence of President Carter, transformed the Democratic agenda for the 95th Congress of 1977-78 into a farce. The business community capitalized on the resultant diffused authority and used its increasingly sophisticated lobbying tactics to defeat every major domestic initiative. The House defeated consumer protection and common situs picketing [see Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, "Labor Law Reform and Its Enemies," *The Nation*, January 6-13, 1979], and the head count on Election Day registration was so unfavorable that its sponsors didn't bother bringing it to the floor. Legislation that passed the House was either filibustered by the Senate (e.g., labor law reform) or completely revised there (the energy program of 1977).

When the 96th Congress was seated in 1979, however, a new tone was discernible. One of the first signs that O'Neill's patient cultivation of partisan loyalty was beginning to bear fruit was a vote by the Democratic caucus to consider the case of Michigan Democrat Charles Diggs Jr. in closed session. Diggs had been convicted of taking kickbacks from Government employees and the issue was whether he should continue to hold his chairmanship of the District of Columbia Committee. The decision to bar the press and the public would not have been possible two years before, and it reflected a willingness to treat the controversial issue as a party matter, not as a subject for grandstanding to the media. At the same time, the freshman Republicans inadvertently worked to heal Democratic wounds by themselves taking up the banner of procedural reform and converting the maneuvers in the House from an intra-Democratic Party dispute into a partisan debate, with the Republicans assuming their customary role as critics of the majority party. Further enhancing the prospects for stronger Democratic unity was the fact that key Democrats elected in 1974 and 1976 had taken their first steps up the seniority ladder. Richard Gephardt of Missouri, Anthony Toby Moffett of Connecticut, Timothy Wirth of Colorado and Leon Panetta, Henry Waxman and Norman Mineta of California had all gained subcommittee chairmanships or seats on the Ways and Means or Budget committees, and in the process had become more interested in substantive legislation than in procedural change.

The most significant development was the retirement of James Delaney of Queens, New York, and his replacement as Rules Committee chairman by Bolling. Bolling's ideological allegiance lay with the leadership and, through the Rules Committee, he began to use the panel's power to delineate the scope of floor debate and the range of amendments permitted on key bills. The importance of this rather arcane power cannot be overestimated. When welfare reform legislation came under consideration, for example, the Rules Committee barred most Republican "workfare" amend-

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ments which many Democrats would have found it politically difficult to vote against, but which also would have made the legislation unacceptable to the Carter Administration. The use of this parliamentary technique known as the "partially closed rule" to set limits on floor consideration is still in the embryonic stage, but it has already played a key role in the House's passage of a measure to restrict contributions by political action committees and of the windfall profits tax. Under this process, the critical vote becomes whether or not the House will approve the "rule," a vote that tends to encourage partisan, rather than ideological, divisions. On these votes, as well as on past budget resolutions, Speaker O'Neill had begun to fashion a slim majority composed exclusively of Democrats, who range from members of the Black Congressional Caucus on the left to some of the moderate to conservative Southern Democrats on the right. This new majority was one of the first concrete manifestations of a revived sense of unity within the party.

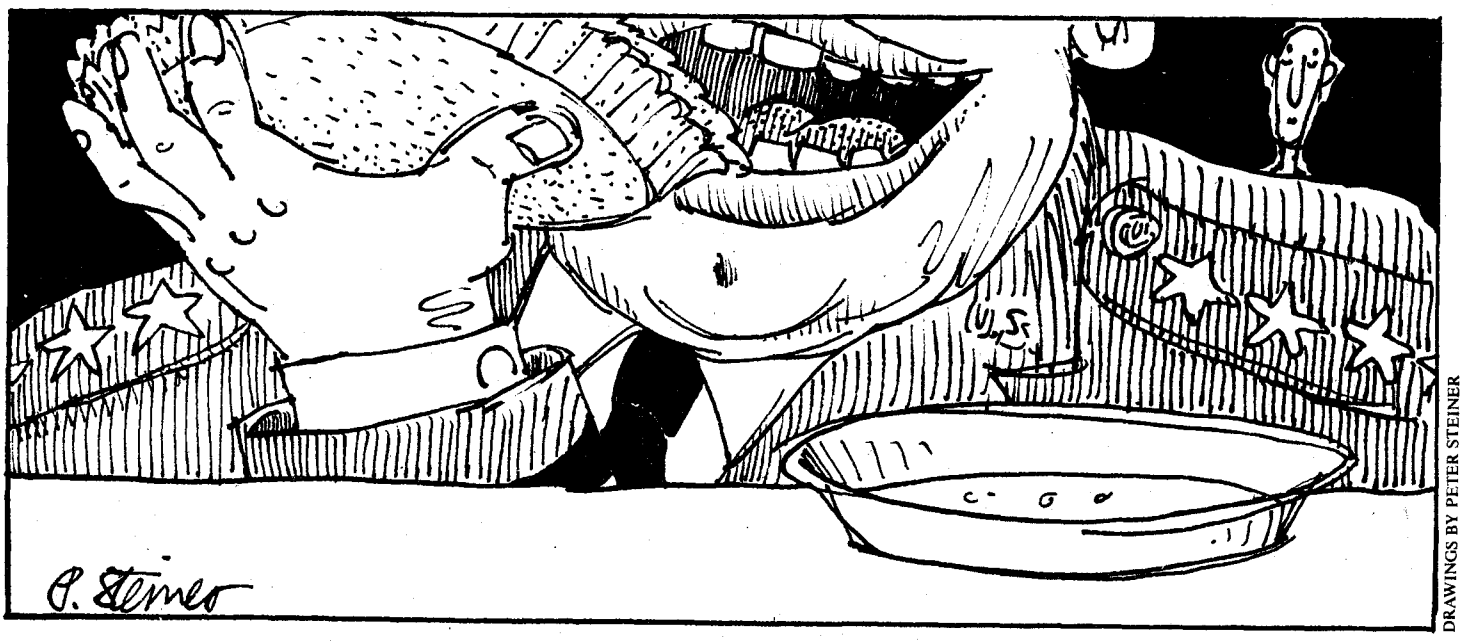
The coalition is a fragile one, however, and will almost certainly be shattered by the drive to balance the budget. All fifteen black Congressmen oppose the move for a balanced 1981 Federal budget, and they are sure to be joined by fifty to seventy liberal whites. With the budget unquestionably the dominant issue this year, the O'Neill majority, already operating on a paper-thin margin of fewer than five votes on many issues, will have to be reshaped, probably to include Republicans; in that case, it would no longer be the O'Neill majority.

Equally important, the Democrats advocating a balanced budget make two essential assumptions: (*1*) cutting tax "expenditures" by closing tax loopholes must not be used as a means of expunging budgetary red ink, because that opens up the Democrats to the charge that they are raising taxes to balance the budget and (*2*) the defense budget must be increased, the only question being by how much. Refusal to close tax loopholes in order to capture more revenue inevitably favors the business community, which is the beneficiary of most politically vulnerable tax expenditures. On the opening day of the House Budget Committee hearings, one of the first requests of Richard Lesher, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, was that the panel leave tax expenditures untouched. As for the inviolability of the defense budget—about 24 percent of the total—the net result can only be that a larger share of the cuts will have to fall on domestic programs.

In the short term, the political consequences of the majority party's inability to make a plausible case for austerity, one that key voting blocs such as blacks and labor will accept as equitable, may have been visible in the Pennsylvania primary, in which Senator Edward Kennedy captured both blocs. The black vote alone was essential to Carter's 1976 victory, providing the margin in the South and in his 51 percent victory in New Jersey and 52 percent success in New York. The 1976 Presidential election marked, in sharp contrast to 1972, a partial return to earlier voting patterns that were closely correlated with income. While George McGovern's support had little or no relationship to economic status, Carter consistently did best among the lowest income levels in every major geographic or ethnic group, from blacks to Catholics to white Southern Protestants. An economic policy that fails to honor this election debt risks serious repercussions at the polls in November.

In the longer run, a policy of continued fiscal restraint will force Democrats to abandon the basic tool the party has used to reward loyal constituent groups: expansion of existing programs (the Comprehensive Employment Training Act, countercyclical aid, summer jobs for youth) and the initiation of new ones—in effect, the outlay side of the budget. If Federal spending remains stagnant, the political fight will shift to the redistribution of the tax burden, a technique of rewarding supporters and punishing opponents that cuts across the entire economic spectrum. It is in this arena that the liberal wing of the Democratic Party is at its weakest.

Of all the committees in the House, O'Neill's influence is probably least on the Ways and Means Committee, where



DRAWINGS BY PETER STEINER

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all tax legislation must originate. The panel is already controlled by a coalition of conservative Democrats and Republicans who demonstrated their strength in 1978. That year marked the first time since Democrats took over Capitol Hill in 1955 that a major tax cut, the Revenue Act of 1978, was skewed in favor of the upper middle class. The minority liberal faction will be further weakened by the retirement of Charles Vanik, Democrat of Ohio, and by the likelihood that James Corman, Democrat of California, will be defeated.

In the ongoing battle over the apportionment of the tax burden, business interests have been quietly winning a series of major concessions on one of the least studied sources of revenue—wealth. In contrast to income, wealth is far less equally distributed throughout the population: in 1976, the top 5 percent of the population received 15.6 percent of the income; the most recent study by the Internal Revenue Service of wealth in 1972 showed that the top 1 percent of the population held 30 percent of the wealth. While the income tax rate structure has remained relatively constant, Congress has done the following over the past five years to lessen the tax burden on wealth: In 1976, the maximum inheritance tax was lowered from 77 to 70 percent and the basic exemption nearly tripled from $60,000 to $175,000. Two years later, the amount of capital gains excluded from regular taxation was raised from 50 to 60 percent. Of the $2.2 billion reduction, about 80 percent went to those making more than $50,000 a year, who in turn make up less than 1 percent of the nation's taxpayers. This year, Congress has enacted legislation repealing altogether a provision known as carry-over basis, which was the first attempt in a generation to tax the increase in the value of inherited property and securities that occurred before the benefactor's death—an extension of the principle that a living person must pay taxes on capital gains. Although carry-over basis was designed to close this loophole for only the richest 2.6 percent of the population, a largely Republican constituency that owns about 75 percent of the wealth, it was repealed by strong majorities in both House and Senate, despite Democratic control.

On a broader, theoretical level, Congressional Democrats, unable to shift to the left and come to grips with the possibility that some of our current economic problems may result in part from the shape of the private marketplace—the share of industrial assets owned by the largest 0.1 percent of manufacturing corporations grew from 41 percent in 1950 to 63.1 percent in 1976—have been overwhelmed by Republican "supply-side" economics. This theory, a trickle-down approach, holds that the answer to the failure of American corporations to keep pace in productivity and capital investment is to provide tax relief. It was the basis for the capital gains reduction in 1978 and it is the ground for the widespread Congressional support for granting business a sharply accelerated capital depreciation schedule starting this year. The strength of the pro-business advocates among taxwriters in Congress was reflected in the willingness of the Chamber of Commerce to sacrifice the goal of a balanced budget if, instead, a tax cut were to be enacted. At this stage in the process, the drive to achieve both a tax cut benefiting business and a balanced budget has a majority behind it in both houses of Congress, a development that, at least in the next election, will make it very difficult for the Democratic Party to hold together what remains of the New Deal coalition. □

CITIZENS' PARTY

Wrong Time, Wrong Race

DEREK SHEARER

The decision taken at the Citizens' Party convention in Cleveland to run Barry Commoner and LaDonna Harris for President and Vice President raises serious questions of political strategy for individuals and groups who yearn and work for progressive change in the United States.

Frequently, the desire for social change can lead well-intentioned people to take actions whose disappointing results could have been foreseen by some careful thought and analysis. Such is the case with the Citizens' Party's Presidential campaign. Supporters and potential supporters of the effort should consider the possibility that the strategy of running a third-party candidate for President will accomplish little in terms of political gains and lead to frustration and eventual political burnout among the activists involved.

The case against the third-party Presidential strategy rests on these analytical pillars:

(1) The United States has a strong two-party system, particularly at the national level, and attempts to crack it have failed badly in the past.

In 1905 a German social thinker, Werner Sombart, published a widely read essay entitled "Why There Is No Socialism in the United States." One of the reasons given by Sombart for this failure was the strength of the two-party system. Sombart listed such unsuccessful challenges as the Liberty Party, the Know-Nothings, the Prohibitionists, the Greenbackers and the People's Party (Populists). In the twentieth century, third-party efforts include the Bull Moose Party, La Follette's Progressive Party, the Socialist Party and, more recently, Peace and Freedom and the American Independent Party.

The most relevant example of the futility of a third-party Presidential challenge on the left is the Progressive Party campaign of 1948 and the candidacy of left-wing New Dealer Henry Wallace. The Progressive Party experience is described in the three-volume work *Gideon's Army* by

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Northwestern University professor Curtis McDougall—a study that should be required reading for the current generation of activists. The Progressive Party arose at a time of much greater political activism than is present today. Seen as Franklin Delano Roosevelt's rightful heir, Wallace could draw crowds of 250,000 workers when he spoke; yet, when Wallace finally ran as a third-party candidate against President Truman, he received fewer votes than did Strom Thurmond, who ran for President on the racist Dixiecrat ticket.

The Progressive Party first existed as the Progressive Association—a network of local and state activists and organizations. Before the decision was made to go the third-party route, some liberal activists of the day, such as lawyer-author Carey McWilliams and California State Senator Robert Kenney, argued that Wallace should run within the Democratic Party, and that if he did, he would win the California primary, where veterans of Upton Sinclair's EPIC (End Poverty In California) campaign predominated, and probably in states like Ohio and Michigan, where there was a strong labor vote. He would not deny Truman the nomination, but he would build a strong progressive organization within the party to continue the struggle against the emerging cold war.

But by running a third-party candidacy, Wallace and his followers isolated themselves from the working-class base of the Democratic Party. Unions affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the keystone of labor's support, refused to bolt the party of the New Deal, no matter how disaffected they were with Truman. In its isolation, the Progressive Party came to be dominated by the Communist Party, Wallace became embittered and retired from politics, and the extensive progressive network decayed and faded away. In addition, by staying outside the Democratic Party, progressives made it easier for the government (at all levels) to engage in cold-war-inspired repression in the 1950s.

The American governmental system is not a parliamentary one, accessible to parties representing minority views. The country has a two-party system that is embedded both in law and ideology (i.e., in people's minds). To go outside it without sufficient reason is to needlessly handicap a movement for political change.

(2) The Citizens' Party lacks a base-building strategy.

The organizers of the Citizens' Party are fond of citing the emergence of the Republican Party in the mid-nineteenth century as evidence that they are on the right track. Unfortunately, they have misread history. The Republican Party was formed out of segments of the existing parties, the Democrats and the Whigs. As Eric Foner notes in his study *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, the ideology of the Republican Party was an amalgam of antislavery, free-labor capitalism, national unity and, to some extent, racism. The party's elements were drawn together by a single moderate reform: the denial of the extension of slavery to new states. To date, the Citizens' Party has not attracted leading members of either major party, nor does it appear likely to do so in the near future. And it does not stand for any single unifying political goal or ideal.

What is the popular base of a party that offers an academic environmentalist and a moderate Native American feminist as its national ticket? There might be an appeal to Jerry Brown's long-pursued New Age coalition, which he claims he was building during his unsuccessful Presidential bid. This comprises antinuclear groups, alternative energy activists, disaffected non-working-class young and a smattering of independent intellectuals and nonsocialist women's groups. In 1984, many of these voters and organizers would readily desert the Citizens' Party for a new Brown campaign, especially if it showed signs of success.

Worse, how can a left-oriented party make a serious attempt—"We are a party contesting for political power," says Commoner—to win a majority of American voters without some appeal to and ties with blue- and white-collar workers—either unionized or nonunionized? Whatever the shortcomings of the American labor movement, no political movement on the left can win elections without the assistance or support of at least significant segments of the labor movement and working-class voters.

Key groups of Democratic voters—particularly blacks and Hispanics—know that there is a difference between Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter, especially when it comes to law and order, the unleashing of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency and Justice Department and the "message" sent to local law-enforcement officials. Activists who think that there is no or little difference are naïve, at best. A Reagan administration would most likely be a step on the road to the faceless, business-suit oligarchy predicted by Bertram Gross in his new book, *Friendly Fascism*. If the Commoner-Harris ticket turns out to be responsible for electing Reagan, the Citizens' Party will begin its political life by alienating thousands if not millions of potential supporters for future progressive ventures.

Some Citizens' Party activists argue that they will appeal to the great mass of disaffected nonvoters who are fed up with the two-party system—that this is their target group, not existing voters in the Democratic or Republican parties. It turns out that most of these nonvoters are working-class, often women or the young. Roosevelt appealed to nonvoters by giving them a chance to vote for reform. He offered them at least some hope of immediate action on their behalf. In 1980, it is more likely that nonvoters will respond to Reagan's apple-pie patriotism than to Commoner's intellectual arguments about the soft-energy path.

Of course, supporters of the Citizens' Party contend that it is building for the future and does not need to worry much about the prospects for immediate change—but building what? Is the Citizens' Party building a majoritarian coalition capable of winning office and enacting change within this century? This does not appear to be the case. Commoner's *Realpolitik* statements to the contrary, the Citizens' Party on its present course will be little more than a symbolic protest, an educational venture, that flares brightly for a year or two, then dies of its lack of strategy and base.

(3) The Presidency is the wrong place to begin.

Even if the Citizens' Party does better at winning votes in

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1980 than I believe it will, starting a movement for change with a Presidential race is the wrong choice of an arena in which to seek power. The immediate fielding of a national slate reflects the party's lack of a base-building strategy and the impatience of its founders.

By running a Presidential ticket, the party has fallen prey to the temptation to let the media do its organizing for it. A premium is inevitably put on gathering crowds to hear and support the national ticket. I learned this from experience in the Tom Hayden for Senate campaign. Well-meant promises to "build organization" gave way to the day-to-day imperatives of trying to get the candidate crowds, votes and media attention—and I've seen this impulse at work within the Citizens' Party already.

Earlier this spring, Barry Commoner came to speak in Los Angeles. The location was a theater in midtown, not a union hall or public auditorium. Organizers of the event never sought assistance from our political coalition in Santa Monica, where a progressive alliance of community and labor groups has elected three of seven council members and all five members of the rent control board. Yet it is precisely such locally rooted political coalitions that are necessary to the building of a national progressive movement in the United States.

If the Citizens' Party's approach is off the mark, what strategy might offer a better chance of success?

A movement that seeks someday to govern the United States in a manner qualitatively different from that of the existing two parties must realize that running a candidate for President should come toward the end of the process rather than at the beginning. The Presidential challenge should reflect a shift in sociopolitical alignments that is already underway in the country, not one that is merely wished for. A real challenge at the national level would build upon a political base that was firmly established at the very least in key primary states—a base made up of the constituencies and organizers of such state and local organizations as the Ohio Public Interest Campaign, Massachusetts Fair Share, Campaign for Economic Democracy, ACORN, North Carolina Action, Public Interest Research Groups, as well as a number of major unions, minority-group organizations and many state and local officials elected by these groups or with their own network of supporters.

The task for the 1980s is to build a strong, indigenous American progressive movement that is rooted in communities where people actually live and work. Running a third-party slate for national office can contribute little to this goal, and may well hinder it. It would be far better for the Citizens' Party or the Progressive Alliance or the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies (or all three together along with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee and the New American Movement) to reconstitute themselves as a national alliance of locally based organizations, unions and groups and work to elect candidates in nonpartisan elections at the city and county level and as left-wing Democrats in partisan city elections and in state elections. Once there are a significant number of progressive representatives in office at the state and local level—perhaps by 1988—then a challenge for the Presidency might make sense. And such a challenge, even if unsuccessful, would work to build and expand the real base that supported the effort.

If a candidate operating on such a strategy—an Economic Democrat or a Democratic Socialist—were to win the Democratic primary, then, of course, right-wing, pro-corporate elements would bolt the party for the Republican fold. Proponents of Economic Democracy and ecological sanity could claim the party, while at the same time appealing to a potential majoritarian audience with a message that included an Economic Bill of Rights and a program aiming at the democratization of economic decision making. The Democratic Party would then become truly a party that stood for democracy.

The American two-party system is a flexible and subtle form of political dominance. Only a movement that takes into account the system's uniqueness and understands that third parties exist only to validate the system and strengthen it will stand any chance at all of changing American society into a more democratic and sane place to live. □

REJOINDER

Now Is the Time...

RICHARD J. WALTON

Derek Shearer, put aside your fears and join us. Sure, the two-party system is the rock on which many a third-party effort has foundered in the past. But the two-party system ain't what it used to be. On the local and state levels, the Democratic and Republican parties still have strength, but nationally they are empty facades.

The national Republican Party has again reverted to type and belongs to the electorally insignificant Goldwater-Reagan sect that is worth political consideration solely because the Democrats seem intent on nominating the only candidate Ronald Reagan could possibly beat, Jimmy Carter. And the national Democratic Party is a hollow shell whose one hope of victory is the nomination of the only candidate Jimmy Carter could possibly beat, Ronald Reagan. For the first time in American history, both major parties seem determined to commit political suicide simultaneously. Reagan leading the Republicans and Carter the Democrats is the resistible force meeting the movable object. Only a political analyst trained in the finest points of theological disputation could pronounce one or the other candidate the much sought-after "lesser evil."

And, Mr. Shearer, the 1948 Progressive Party campaign simply is not relevant. Henry Wallace, for all his enormous

Richard J. Walton, a member of the Citizens' Party national committee, is the author of a book on the 1948 Progressive Party campaign, Henry Wallace, Harry Truman, and the Cold War *(The Viking Press).*

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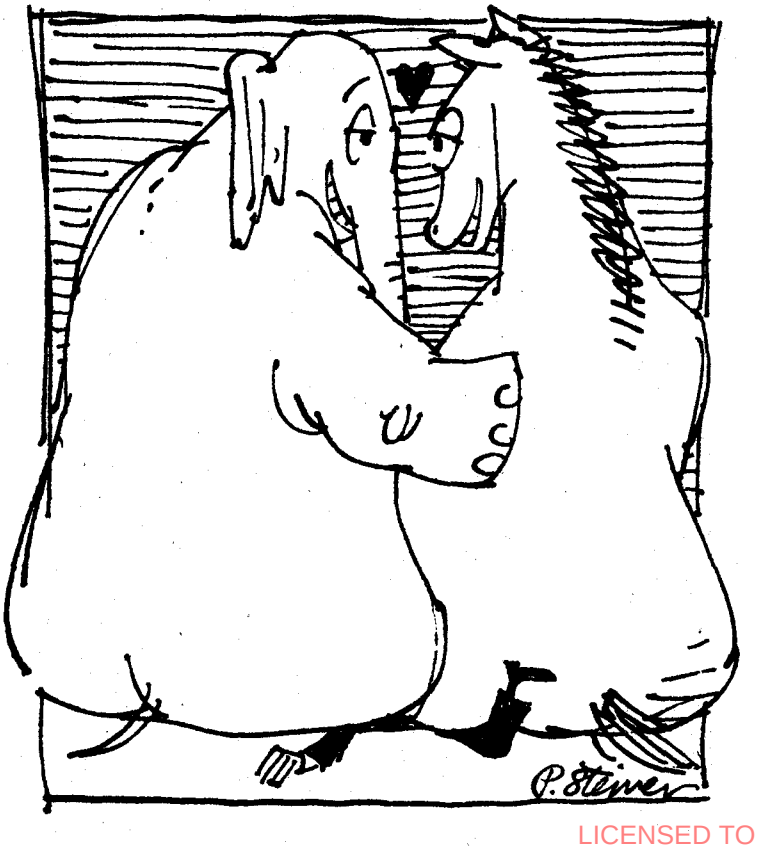
political appeal, ran at precisely the *wrong* historical moment. The progressives were smashed by the anti-Communist hysteria that was to disfigure American politics for at least a decade and a half.

Now the historical moment is precisely *right*. The Citizens' Party certainly didn't make the moment, but as men and women of the left, we would be irresponsible if we didn't attempt to seize it. Never have the two major parties been so weak; never have they put forward such unattractive candidates, and never has the electorate been so disillusioned with traditional politics and politicians. The voters are demanding an alternative. That's why John Anderson has rushed into the fray. He recognizes that the historical moment is ripe, and he's hoping to ride these new political currents right into the White House.

Academic and leftist theoreticians like the idea of building the left block by block over the years, but American politics just doesn't work that way. Americans are not patient. When a new political party is born or when the old parties are permanently transformed, it will not be as the culmination of a long building process but in a flash of historical lightning.

We of the Citizens' Party believe the political skies are streaked with just that kind of lightning right now. No one can predict exactly where it will strike, but this historical moment could be the beginning of a serious change in American politics. Although Anderson's entry will deprive the Citizens' Party of hundreds of thousands, possibly millions of anti-Carter, anti-Reagan protest votes, it also means that three men will be trying to occupy two political spaces, putting terrible stress on political institutions already fragile. This will cause change, as inevitable as it is unpredictable.

Reagan will seek his majority from the right to the center, while Carter and Anderson will range a little further to the left, each hoping he'll get the progressive vote because it has no place else to go. But there will be a place for the progressive vote to go. The Citizens' Party will not seek unorganized progressive voters only but will actively seek the support of just those organized progressive groups that Mr. Shearer correctly believes are the basis of a political party of the left: peace, environmental, antinuke and so on, not only for the 1980 election but also for the years to come. The campaign will be the rallying point about which progressive groups can coalesce.



We think, too, that many voters, not merely convinced progressives, share our distrust of corporate America. We believe that millions are deeply distrustful of the oil companies, the utilities, the automobile and steel manufacturers and other giant corporations. We believe that millions now see the connection between inflation and recession and the corporations.

We are convinced that Barry Commoner and LaDonna Harris will effectively distinguish between Anderson's vague and only sometimes liberal positions and ours. If Americans want to vote for a party of the left, contrasted to merely voting against Carter and Reagan, the Citizens' Party will provide them with a principled and effective alternative. If enough people want what we have to offer, then there will be *after* November a new party of the left.

We can't guarantee that the Citizens' Party is going to survive, but we do know that imponderable political currents are now in motion and we do know that the interaction of these powerful currents and the unique electoral circumstances could result in a wholly new situation come November. We believe that a new beginning *is* possible.

Such a new beginning is much more likely if the Derek Shearers we admire and need put aside their caution and join the Citizens' Party in what could be a great new political adventure. And even if we fail, could we ever forgive ourselves for leaving the field to Carter, Reagan and Anderson? We've got to try because it's the necessary thing to do, and the right thing. □

THE SIOUX SUIT

Black Hills Whitewash

JILL NORGREN and
PETRA T. SHATTUCK

In a decision last year that held the U.S. Government liable for the most "ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealing in our history," the United States Court of Claims awarded the Sioux Nation $103 million in damages. The court held that the U.S. Government's seizure by the Act of 1877 of 7.5 million acres of land in the Black Hills belonging to the Sioux Nation had violated the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. The Sioux were awarded

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$103 million in damages—$17 million for the fair market value of the Black Hills in 1877, plus 5 percent interest on that amount compounded over 102 years. But the Justice Department appealed, and its arguments before the Supreme Court reflected attitudes toward Indians that were more appropriate to Gen. George Armstrong Custer's day than to our own.

It was Custer who in 1874 announced to the world that there was gold in the Black Hills and set off a clamor among white prospectors to take the land away from its Indian owners. The Grant Administration, which had only six years earlier guaranteed the Sioux the "absolute and undisturbed use" of the land by solemn treaty, responded by first attempting to coerce the Indians to cede the Black Hills according to the 1868 treaty. When that failed, the Government forced the Sioux out. Federal agents disarmed the Indians, took away their ponies and "practically everything the Indians had" and, finally, threatened to cut off the Government rations on which the Indians were dependent. When a majority of the Indians still refused to turn over the Black Hills to the prospectors, Congress passed the Act of 1877, which accomplished the land-grab by fiat.

At the time, the U.S. Government justified its high-handed action by claiming that the Sioux were not self-sufficient. This contention was rich in irony since the 1868 treaty had already seized forty-eight million acres from the Sioux Nation, virtually eliminating its hunting ground, after the buffalo had been decimated by whites. When the Army dismounted and disarmed the Indians, they became totally dependent on the Government for food. In short, the U.S. Government took away the Indians' self-sufficiency, then pointed to their dependent state as proof of their inability to manage their own affairs.

The Justice Department's case on appeal amounts to condoning retroactively this historical injustice. Brushing aside the amply documented Court of Claims finding that the United States had "practiced duress on the starving Sioux" in expelling them from their land in order to open it up to gold prospectors, Deputy Solicitor General Louis Claiborne argued that the Government had been motivated solely by a concern for the best interests of the Sioux Nation. Turning history on its head, the Justice Department argued that no wrong had been done in 1877. It was as if the present West German Government were to defend the record of Nazi policies by claiming that Hitler's henchmen had, after all, believed their actions to be in the best interests of mankind.

The underlying premise of the Justice Department's brief is that conduct toward Indian tribes is exempt from the constraints of constitutional standards and international principles of human rights. In making that argument, the Justice Department did not hesitate to distort the historical record. It relied on court decisions of an era that paid scant attention to the rights of people who were not white and contended that Congress can break Indian treaties at will and exercise plenary, i.e., nearly absolute and unreviewable, power over Indians. The authority for this sweeping claim was the Supreme Court's 1903 decision in *Lone Wolf* v. *Hitchcock*. That the *Lone Wolf* case, which Judge Philip Nichols Jr. of the Court of Claims called "the Indians' Dred Scott decision," is still law is in itself an indictment of U.S. Indian policy. The Government's reliance today on a decision which, according to Judge Nichols, "certainly no Supreme Court past 1938 would make" shows that the Carter Administration's position in the Sioux case differs little from nineteenth-century views.

The Justice Department takes the position that Indian land has no constitutional protection and that the Government can, therefore, do virtually as it pleases with the property of Indians. What this means, says Steve Tullberg of the Indian Law Resource Center, is that "even land rights guaranteed by treaty are not worth the paper the treaty is written on." Or, as the Washington attorneys for the Sioux Nation put it, the Justice Department is urging the Supreme Court to amend the Fifth Amendment to make it read, "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation, *unless the property belongs to an Indian tribe.*"

In language that might make even a confirmed nineteenth-century imperialist blush, the Government's attorneys alleged that "the Indian tribes have been incapable of prudent management of their communal property" and that the United States must, therefore, do it for them. Moreover, "a disposal of tribal property in the discharge of this responsibility to manage the property for the tribe's benefit is an act on behalf of the tribe and, in effect, a disposal by the tribe." When the Government imposes its superior management ability on the incompetent tribe, the tribe must accept its actions for, as the Justice Department puts it, "a proper exercise of this power is no more a taking than would be a sale by the tribe itself." If, in its superior wisdom, the Government decides to alienate tribal land, it cannot possibly be accused of acting unconstitutionally because, in effect, the tribe itself sold the land. A more devastating combination of nineteenth-century racism with 1984 Orwellian double-think is difficult to imagine.

Jack Greenberg, director of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc., terms the spectacle of such an argument being made in open court today without embarrassment "offensive in the extreme. It would be over the front page of every newspaper if it were made with

Jill Norgren and Petra T. Shattuck teach in the government department at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

COMING UP

Symposium—The Anderson Candidacy
Marcus G. Raskin—Progressive Liberalism for the 1980s
George Vickers—What's Left: A Road Map to the Sectarian Left
Michael Reisman—International Law and the Hostage Rescue Mission

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respect to black or Hispanic people."

The Justice Department's cavalier disregard for the constitutional protections of tribal rights offends not only civil rights lawyers; it also comes as a shock to those who have applauded the Carter Administration's advocacy of human rights in world politics. Apparently the "abiding commitment [of the American people] to the full realization of human rights ideals" which Mr. Carter pledged at the United Nations General Assembly only a few years ago does not apply to Native Americans. Given the occasion to right—in a very limited way—a historic wrong, the Carter Justice Department now argues that it is too expensive to do so, that the United States did no wrong in any case and that the American Indians are legally incompetent to judge their own best interests.

Today, an increasing number of Indian nations are charging the United States Government with violating their social, economic and political rights. The refusal of the United States to return land illegally seized from Indians is considered the most glaring example of such infringements. For these Indians—the more tradition-minded members of the Lakota, Creek, Seminole, Iroquois Six Nations Confederacy, Hopi, Western Shoshone, Northern Cheyenne and Sioux tribes—the ultimate financial settlement in the case now before the Supreme Court is irrelevant, for it begs what to them is the real and far more profound question: return of the land and with it the possibility of preserving the Indian way of life. Land, the traditional Indians have said, is "our heritage, our homeland and our birthright," and it will not be sold "for a few pieces of silver."

Return of the land, is, however, an alternative that the Government is unwilling to consider. Since Congress created the Indian Claims Commission (I.C.C.) in 1946, the Government has used monetary compensation to absolve itself of responsibility for illegal and immoral seizure of Indian land. Not incidentally, such payments extinguish Indian title to the land.

It is exactly this unwanted trade of land for dollars that many Native Americans refuse to accept. Tradition-minded members of the Hopi tribe have long opposed monetary settlements for expropriated lands. In the late 1940s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs urged the Hopi to file a monetary claim with the I.C.C. for millions of acres. Much of this land was considered sacred land by the tribe—they called it "our Jerusalem." "We cannot and will not file any claims," the traditional Hopi wrote President Truman. "This land is not for leasing or for sale. This is our sacred soil."

Shoshone leaders are equally adamant in their rejection of an award of $26 million by the I.C.C. as restitution for the Government's illegal seizure of twenty-four million acres in 1872. "We never lost that land, we never left it, and we're not selling it," they protest. "In our religion it's forbidden to take money for land. What's really happening is that the Government, through the Claims Commission,

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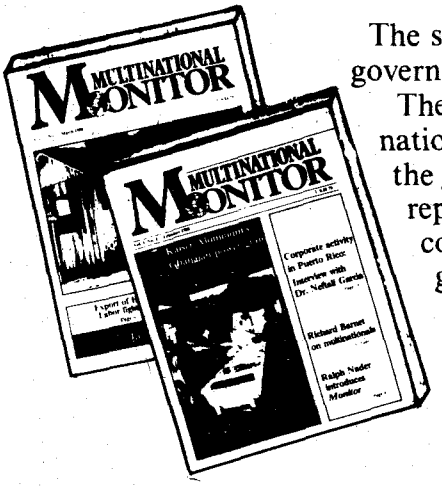
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is stealing the land right now."

Although a large segment of the Sioux people have also demanded return of the Black Hills rather than accept monetary compensation for them, the tribe's Washington lawyers have not raised that issue. Their brief not only fails to demand a settlement that goes beyond money, it gratuitously concedes "the right of the Government in the exercise of its plenary power to extinguish Indian rights without any constitutional restraint and without judicial review." Only the amicus brief filed by the Indian Law Resource Center focuses on the failure of Congress, the executive branch and the courts themselves to provide the same "unflinching constitutional protections to Indian interests [which they have] accorded all others." The second-class legal status imposed on Indians, the center argues, is "racist law" and denies Indian human rights.

If the Supreme Court rules in favor of the Sioux and awards the $103 million, a small step in the process of redressing the wrongs committed by the American Government will have been taken. Money payments alone, however, cannot satisfy fundamental human-rights principles. Such a decision would still apply a legal double standard to Indian land. Justice Hugo Black's admonition that "great nations, like great men, should keep their word," remains unheeded.

Since the Washington attorneys representing the Sioux do not speak for members of the tribe who want their land back, not money, they argue that "the concern of this case is with just compensation, not good or evil." But given America's legacy of brutality and racism toward Indians, the Government's arrogant challenge to the Court of Claims award in the Sioux case, if it prevails, would enshrine the evils of the past as official U.S. policy today. □

SERGEANT DOE'S COUP

Liberia—Roots Of Revolution

STEPHEN TALBOT

The sudden overthrow of the Government of Liberia, which always boasted that it was the most stable in Africa, caught many foreign observers unawares. But the causes of the coup in which President William R. Tolbert Jr. was assassinated and thirteen officials were executed, with ninety-one others facing military trials, had been long simmering. The junior officers who participated, led by an obscure 28-year-old master sergeant named Samuel K. Doe, followed the example set by Flight Lieut. Jerry Rawlings, who led a similar revolt from the barracks in Ghana last June. To anyone closely following events in Liberia over the past year, it has been obvious that the opposition to the Government was growing and that repression had intensified rather than quelled the popular unrest.

Discontent with the paternalistic, nepotism-ridden Tolbert administration reached a flash point in April 1979, when inflation-squeezed workers and the embittered unemployed held a rally in Monrovia, the capital, to protest a Government-authorized increase in the price of rice—Liberia's staple food—from $22 for a 100 pound bag to $30. The proposed hike was staggering since the average Liberian worker earns only $80 a month. In what proved to be a fatal overreaction, President Tolbert ordered his army and police to open fire on the demonstrators. A riot ensued. Looters targeted stores owned by Lebanese and Indian merchants and by the Tolbert clan. Forty-one people were killed and hundreds injured, according to the Government. An editor of one of the Government-sponsored newspapers was fired after reporting that seventy-nine people had been shot and killed. An opposition leader, Prof. Togba-nah Tipoteh, now Minister of Economic Planning in the new Government, insisted that nearly 200 protesters were murdered, and compared the massacre to Sharpeville and Soweto in South Africa.

A badly shaken and deeply embarrassed President Tolbert (the violence was bad publicity, with the Organization of African Unity conference slated for Monrovia a few months later) rescinded the food price increase, but the "rice riot" marked the beginning of the end. One danger signal that should have particularly worried Tolbert was that many soldiers refused orders to attack their fellow citizens and joined in the looting. After conducting an investigation into the April violence, Randolph McLaughlin, an American lawyer representing the Center for Constitutional Rights, concluded that Tolbert seemed to be losing the support of the Liberian Army. In fact, Tolbert had to rely on an elite police force and troops flown in from neighboring Guinea to put down the rebellion.

During the O.A.U. conference in July, a kind of uneasy truce prevailed. But the tension in Monrovia and the popular dissatisfaction were palpable to any journalist who ventured outside the isolated artificial confines of the opulent summit site. Red-bereted paramilitary men and undercover police were everywhere. Twice my film crew and I were nearly arrested for photographing "undesirable" scenes—the grimy poverty of Monrovia.

The Government was circulating a brochure offering tax holidays and a docile labor force to multinational corporations that wanted to set up shop in a new "industrial free zone" outside the capital. The slogan was: "Industrialists of the World Reunite in Liberia to Experience Freedom." The glossy color enticements featured a cover photo of a worker in a hard hat with the caption: "Hire me! I am skilled, hard-working, reliable and inexpensive, and there are many like me in my country. Give us a chance to help you make good profits in Liberia." But workers in and near the "free zone" gave me a different story. Dozens of construction, electrical

Stephen Talbot, former Africa editor of Internews Bulletin, *visited Liberia last summer. He is producing a film on U.S. policy in Africa. Portions of the Liberia footage were broadcast recently on KQED in San Francisco.*

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and fishing workers said they considered themselves lucky to have jobs, but complained that their salaries—$250 a month for skilled work—were inadequate to support a family. Asked what they thought of the Government, many shrugged their shoulders and grew silent, while others lowered their voices and, nervously glancing over their shoulders, confided that the Tolbert administration "does not represent us." Most said they were not allowed to form unions, but those that were union members accused the labor officials of collusion with management. The Liberian National Federation of Trade Unions was headed by Tolbert's son. Another relative of the President, Harvard-trained Richard Tolbert, told me that unions were unnecessary in the family-owned Mesurado conglomerate fishing company because "we are one big happy family."

The same disparity between management public relations and worker frustration was evident at the Firestone Rubber & Tire Company plantation at Harbel, Liberia—the largest rubber plantation in the world. Established in 1926, the 220-square-mile plantation is reminiscent of the old American South—a company town complete with its own housing, church, stores, police force and jail. The white American president and managers dined in colonial style, served by impeccably dressed black waiters, and relaxed on their private nine-hole golf course. During a guided tour of the plantation, an angry worker took me aside to dispute what he had overheard of the company spokesperson's presentation. He said he earned only $180 a month after twenty years of service and revealed that the 12,000 Firestone employees were pressing management to recognize the union. Tolbert and his pro-business predecessor, William Tubman, who introduced Liberia's "open door" policy, maintained cozy relations with Firestone, but even Tolbert recognized the potentially explosive labor conflict on the plantation and during his visit to the United States last fall asked Firestone in Akron, Ohio, to boost wages (Liberia's rubber workers are the lowest paid in the industry in the world) lest the simmering discontent boil over. But the plea came too late.

In August, just after the O.A.U. conference ended, iron-ore workers, unpaid for months, went on strike and sabotaged equipment. Troops were again called out. It was another omen. Tolbert belatedly began to initiate political reforms, hoping to draw opposition forces into his True Whig Party. But in March, the People's Progressive Party (P.P.P.), which had been initiated by Liberian students in the United States, called for a general strike to bring down the Tolbert Government. Thirty-eight members, including party leader Gabriel Baccus Matthews, were arrested in Government raids and charged with treason and sedition. Others were hunted down. Three days before the coup, Amnesty International criticized the Tolbert Government for issuing "an open invitation to political murder" by offering rewards of up to $2,000 for the capture "dead or alive" of twenty members of the P.P.P. This crackdown was probably the spark that ignited the rebellion.

Liberia, a humid, lush nation about the size of Pennsylvania, with 1.8 million people, is easy to caricature. It is an impoverished, Americanized piece of Africa founded by descendants of repatriated American slaves in 1847 as a Christian colony. The flag is red, white and blue; the currency is the dollar. It has the largest Central Intelligence Agency station in Africa, a telecommunications monitoring facility. One of the basic conflicts has always been between the Americo-Liberian elite—about 3 percent of the population—and the indigenous people, who resent the monopoly on political power held by the black settlers. The ostentatious wealth of the Tubmans and Tolberts further aggravated tensions in a country where the minimum wage is $1.50 a day. Bribes and blatant conflicts of interest among Government officials who also had vast business holdings were a daily source of irritation.

Master Sergeant Doe represents the indigenous population and the disgruntled enlisted ranks. He has appointed a "national unity" Cabinet of eighteen members, including three holdovers from the Tolbert administration. People's Progressive Party leader Matthews is the Foreign Minister. His mildly socialist party, with a base among the urban poor, has three other Cabinet members. The other major opposition group, the Pan-Africanist Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), has two representatives including the Minister of Economic Planning, who had been fired from the University of Liberia for his ideas about agricultural cooperatives and his calls for a more equal distribution of the nation's wealth and mineral resources. MOJA is strongest in the rural areas among the exploited indigenous population. During the O.A.U. conference, MOJA held a militant rally in support of the liberation movements in southern Africa, which also provided an acceptable cover for its opposition to the Government.

For the moment, the military is the dominant force in Liberian politics and is asserting its authority with harsh summary executions. But the 5,000-man army is too small to rule alone; it will not survive without civilian support. Meanwhile, tremors of the reformist military coups in Ghana and Liberia are already being felt in other West African countries, where pro-Western conservative regimes have until now been able to withstand the movements for social change that have rocked southern Africa. In the current cold-war atmosphere, the Hearst-owned *San Francisco Examiner* warned, "Another U.S. Ally Toppled." Another ally who cast his lot with the multinationals, lived grandly amid poverty and ignored the demands of his people. □

Europe

(Continued From Front Cover)

which one of West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's advisers, in careful circumlocutions, explained why the Germans were hesitant about converting their country into a radioactive cemetery. The response was almost universal reprobation: the Germans lacked the courage of our convictions. The visitor's mild remonstrance, that Americans did

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not seem willing to conscript their children into the armed forces they were ostensibly ready to send anywhere and everywhere, was ignored.

More is at stake than the sensibilities of an imperial elite which has lost its empire. Our national-security apparatus was designed for an era when we exercised unquestioned leadership—briefly, when we gave orders. The apparatus breaks down when faced with the necessity for continuous and delicate negotiations among equals. Time and again we have confronted the West Europeans with *faits accompli*, concentrated on the form rather than the substance of consultation and responded to the expression of differences as if they were evidence of disloyalty, if not treason.

Three different official American interpretations of recent European behavior are regularly put forth. The first consists of firm declarations that the Europeans are unequivocally at one with us. When evidence to the contrary mounts, yet another rhetorical device is deployed. The Europeans, it is explained, are not only at one with us but urging us on. However, domestic political considerations require some of our most enthusiastic European backers to pretend publicly that they have reservations. When, finally, the Europeans' dramaturgy allows no interpretation but that they do disagree with us, a third American argument emerges. The Europeans, it is explained, have long since abandoned Athens, Rome, Napoleonic France or Imperial Britain as models. They have taken, instead, to imitating the Finns. They are, in sum, cowards—anxious to save their necks in the short run, and sure to lose them (to the Soviet Russians, the oil-producing nations, the Arabs or the Third World) in the long one. Schmidt's warning, the other day, that the absence of direct communication between the two superpowers means that our world resembles that of 1914 on the eve of war will not fail to impress these exegetes as spineless. If we did not have iron figures like British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher about, where would we be? Actually, Mrs. Thatcher's words and her Foreign Minister's deeds diverge strikingly. Lord Carrington prefers alignment with the Europeans—despite Britain's economic quarrels with the European Community—to exclusive solidarity with the United States.

Mutually insulting indiscretions have become the chief means of discourse between Washington and the European capitals. Some American critics of Zbigniew Brzezinski think that his personal synthesis of dogmatism and impetuosity in dealing with the Soviet Union (and everyone and everything else) is due to his Polish antecedents. The truth about Brzezinski is that, unlike Henry Kissinger, he does not have a European intelligence: he is a North American with an accent. The authentic Poles are otherwise occupied. The Communist leader Edward Gierek and his Government are increasing their contacts with the West and East Germans in an effort to contain the spread of world political tensions. Pope John Paul II recently dispatched two speakers to a ceremony at Monte Cassino to argue for a distinctive European cultural and social vocation—West and East. One of them, the most political of Italian Jesuits, Father Bartolomeo Sorge, used the phrase "one Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" first uttered by Charles de Gaulle. The other, the Vatican Foreign Minister, Monsignor Agostino Casaroli, warned of the catastrophic consequences of the division of Europe into blocs participating in superpower conflict. Decidedly, the Vatican and the White House speak different sorts of Polish.

Most official American contumely, recently, has been reserved for the West Germans—presumably on the ground that the French can always be expected to insist upon an unseemly amount of independence. Some Social Democrats (former Chancellor Willy Brandt among them) think that our intelligence services were involved in a crude attempt a while ago to defame Egon Bahr, one of the Social Democrats' most prominent figures. More recently, Brzezinski accused the Germans of "Finlandizing" themselves, to which Schmidt responded by declaring the term offensive—above all, to the Finns. The serial gaffes, hesitations, presumptions and reversals of the Carter Administration do seem to disturb the Germans inordinately—and not only because of their penchant for order. The German governmental coalition's decision to proceed with the introduction of Pershing and cruise medium-range missiles was predicated on early American ratification of the SALT II treaty. Indeed, the Germans were told that they had to agree to missile deployment to convince the Senate to ratify the treaty. The decision having been taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (at the cost of extraordinary political strains in Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands), the Carter Administration in its weakness renounced the treaty. Now Schmidt, appalled at the international situation, has proposed that both blocs delay deployment of their Eurostrategic missiles in favor of further negotiations. The proposal does not depart drastically from the previous timetable (NATO decided to produce missiles that it will take some years to deploy). However, it is implicit verification of a position that Schmidt explicitly denies. In effect, the Germans are situating themselves between the Soviet Union and the United States. As I write, Schmidt has not accepted the invitation from Premier Leonid Brezhnev to visit him in Moscow in June: it would be surprising were he not to do so, because German public opinion in an electoral year is deeply troubled—not by strains in the alliance with the United States but by the fear of war.

It may be objected that the German opposition, the Christian Democratic and Christian Social parties, are resolutely pro-American in their sympathies—and increasingly critical of the present German Government for its refusal to follow our policies. No doubt a number of opposition leaders indulge in rhetorical toughness toward the Soviet Union—but, curiously, they are not campaigning to undo the reconciliation with Eastern Europe initiated by the Social Democrats and Free Democrats. It would not be beyond the capacity of our White House to seek to influence German opinion in

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favor of the opposition—only to discover that, in office, it would pursue independent policies toward the Soviet Union. The immediate point is that the German rightist opposition (though not its candidate), which criticizes the Schmidt Government for insufficient loyalty to the United States, is apparently due for an electoral defeat.

The German policy of deepening its relations with Eastern Europe has obvious German roots. The Social Democrats in particular consider that they bear a responsibility for that part of the nation which has to live in a Soviet satellite state. German industry has traditionally exported to central and Eastern Europe. And the other Western Europeans are in favor of this. For the thought of Germany locked in profound conflict with the Soviet bloc generates Western European fears of being drawn into such a conflict themselves. Nor is the present German policy of good relations with the East an alternative to Franco-German reconciliation; it is a fundament of it. Good relations between de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer more than twenty years ago were deliberately cultivated by each to increase European independence of the United States.

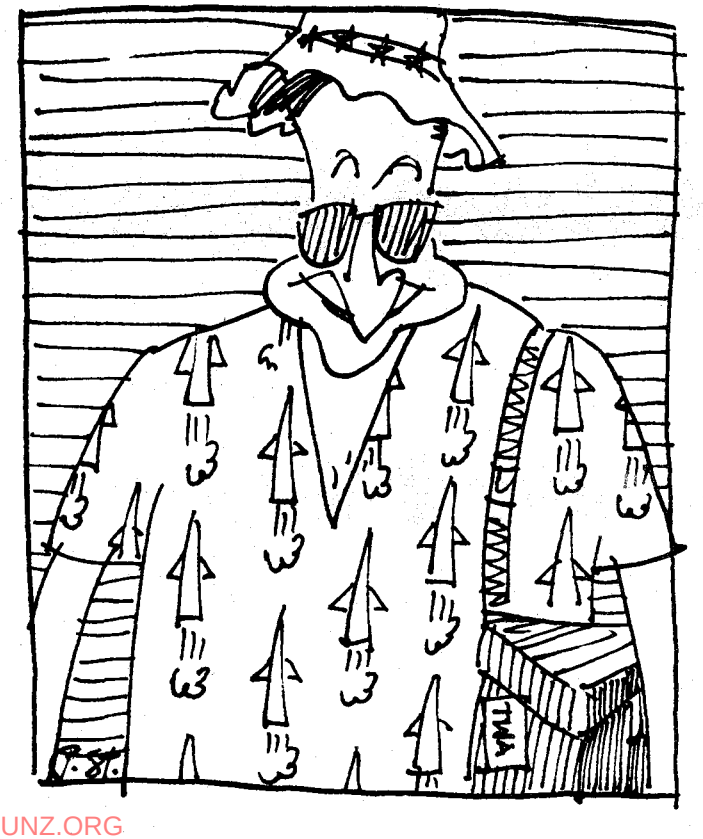
While America has been obsessed by Iran, the Europeans are worrying most about superpower conflict as a result of the failure of the SALT II treaty and the Afghanistan invasion. Indeed, *The Economist* of London—which favors a hard line toward the Soviet Union—has advised its American friends that the hostages are not all that important. Treat them, *The Economist* says, as prisoners of war—and get on with the real battle. For a journal that professes intimate kinship with our country, *The Economist* is absurdly casual. Let us leave aside the international issue evoked by officially sanctioned terrorism, which threatens every embassy in the world and therefore the entire tissue of international relations—weak as it is. Surely *The Economist* should understand that the American public, particularly in view of the pressures put upon President Carter, includes a large segment of opinion that does not take a long historical view. When American planes bombed North Vietnam, millions of Americans seemed to think that it was impermissible of the Vietnamese to have held captured air crews prisoner. Moreover, *The Economist* ignores the fact that the present American Administration has but one historical aim: to win the election in November. To that end, it will do whatever seems electorally promising, as the incredible risk it has just taken in Iran demonstrates.

Of course, the Europeans (whose own record with respect to human rights in the Shah's Iran was not brilliant) think that the United States should somehow make its peace with the Iranian revolution. They see no reason why injured American national pride should lead to a situation in which Europe's supplies of oil may be cut and worse disasters follow.

The singular belief that the maintenance of our forces in Europe is an act of charity to the West Europeans is no doubt confined to the less reflective sectors of American opinion. When our foreign policy elite insists upon the extension of NATO to the rest of the globe, however, it does nothing to dispel European anxieties that too much is being asked of Europe for too little. Of course, nothing can and should preclude common action elsewhere in the world when the allies agree. European reluctance to extend NATO to the rest of the world is not just a result of differing perceptions. It is the result of different interpretations of different interests. It is by no means clear to Europeans that the United States will expose the American continent to nuclear destruction in order to defend Western Europe. One reason for the American desire to proceed with Eurostrategic weapons is that, once in place, these could allow a nuclear exchange between Western Europe and Eastern Europe (and the western parts of the Soviet Union) before the utilization of our own major strategic nuclear forces. That is precisely what many Europeans fear: a nuclear conflict between the superpowers fought mainly in their countries. By the time the superpowers paused for reflection after the initial exchanges, Western and Eastern Europe would have ceased to exist.

These uncertainties account for the French policy of maintaining an independent nuclear force. They may also account for the British one, although the British hardly shout it from their rooftops. In the absence of absolute reliance on the use of an American nuclear deterrent to defend them, the West Europeans have two options, not mutually exclusive. One is the development of conventional forces, the path chosen by the Germans, whose army is the strongest in Western Europe. The other is the development of an independent nuclear force, the French policy. The British have attempted both.

Politics is not a matter of logic, but it is in the logic of the West European drive for autonomy within the Atlantic alliance that the question of a European nuclear force must again arise. The Germans have been decisive on this matter



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up to now: given their own difficulties with their own history, and given deep European reservations about Germany's potential for destructiveness, they have renounced the manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons. There are tactical nuclear units in NATO that, in the event of war, would operate under joint American-German command. But the Germans have made it clear that they want no part of the tactical command of the new generation of nuclear weapons proposed for Europe. Indeed, the idea of a European nuclear force evokes little enthusiasm from most Europeans at this point.

From our own perspective, such a force would further enhance the anarchic polycentrism of a world that is at present uncontrollable even if the superpowers could agree on containing their conflicts. But averting the dangers of a European nuclear force requires that we get on with serious measures of arms control and force reduction in Europe. The Carter Administration, however, has seized upon the Afghan crisis as an excuse to halt even its previous tortoiselike approach to these problems. That, presumably, is why Schmidt has urgently proposed that the superpowers take up arms control in Europe.

One consolation offered by our policy elites (to themselves) as the alliance entered its present crisis was that the Europeans are divided, after all, between Atlanticists and Europeanists. The first thing to be said is that those who most loudly proclaim their Atlanticism usually do so for precise political ends of their own. I have already said that Mrs. Thatcher's words contrast with her Foreign Minister's deeds. In fact, the latter may be planning to succeed her when her ruinous domestic policies make her further tenure of office impossible. Many British Conservatives are very European in their ideas, and the strenuous anti-Europeanists among the Laborites are by no means Atlanticists. In Italy, a considerable group of the anti-Communist segment of the Christian Democratic Party (around Amintore Fanfani) are not above questioning the Italian Communists' Western credentials—but are themselves deeply critical of what they interpret as American aspirations to cultural and political hegemony. Most American reporting from Italy overlooks, in any case, the very large measure of bipartisanship which already prevails in Italian foreign policy between the Christian Democrats and the Communists. In France, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's somewhat tortuous foreign policy may be explained, in part, by the necessity of satisfying the Gaullist wing of his tenuous Presidential coalition. He is also not above giving the Soviet Union reason to instruct French Communists that there could be worse French Presidents. In Germany, the Atlanticism of the opposition does not mean that they would renounce a somewhat autonomous foreign policy, especially when it is thought by the public to have had positive consequences for relations with the other Germany.

If electoral calculations do play a major role in the behavior of European leaders, however, then they are only responding to a very substantial public opinion that approves of a foreign policy that is not simply an obedient response to American initiatives. (Recent European polls allow no other conclusion.) That our initiatives are often contradictory, discontinuous and dangerous strengthens the Europeans in their conviction that to a very large extent, they may be on their own. It is not easy for them to accept this—especially since disbelief in the efficacy and legitimacy of American leadership is usually accompanied by a brutally clear appreciation of a multidimensional Soviet threat. Note that the Italian Communist Party has not only strenuously denounced the invasion of Afghanistan but has asked the Catholic and Socialist blocs in all of Western Europe to join in a search for a mediating role for Europe. The Europeanists, then, include the Pope, Italian Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer, Carrington, Giscard and Schmidt—a pronouncedly ecumenical gathering.

The White House has insulted the Europeans, confronted them with *faits accompli* and is now attempting to blackmail them. Senator Edward Kennedy is quite right to depict the President as buried in the ruins of a failed foreign policy. One of the reasons for its failure, however, is that the White House did not permit itself to notice the fundamental change in our relations with the Continent. For Europe would have sought autonomy even if American Presidential leadership had been infinitely more gifted. In any event, a rational American foreign policy would turn European autonomy to our advantage. The Europeans' insistence on maintaining détente in Europe at a time of confrontation elsewhere is a contribution to global stability. Since Carter seems to think that he cannot talk with the Soviet Union, it is to everyone's advantage that Schmidt should go to Moscow and a Soviet Foreign Minister visit Paris. Given the costs of war, keeping open the channels of communication is a European contribution worth infinitely more than a new set of nuclear weapons.

No doubt the long-term implications of European autonomy entail more military expenditures by the Europeans (and the more they spend now at our urging, the more autonomous they will become). A European nuclear deterrent—not quite a euphemism for a German one—would indeed have disturbing effects. The advantages of autonomy can be realized only if the United States, for its part, actively seeks arms and force limitations in Europe.

At the moment, our Government is very busy realizing a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because we think that tension in the Persian Gulf must entail tension in Europe, we are discouraging the Europeans' efforts to secure stability in Europe as a precondition of a resolution of problems elsewhere. On more fundamental issues, like the Brandt Commission's call for a North-South summit to discuss the world economic crisis, there is at the moment hardly a hint of official American interest. What we may expect, in the next few weeks and months, is a desperate recourse by Carter to the most primitive behavior and language with respect to the Europeans. It may well endanger the alliance, but it might have marginal electoral benefits. In a world in which Brzezinski's most newly promoted student is Hamilton Jordan, anything is possible. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

New Signs on the Gospel Highway

ANTHONY HEILBUT

In an old hymn, gospel singers lament that the world has withheld its gold and left them with meager fare. A cynic might add that the world of the popular arts has grown richer by appropriating most of gospel's own treasure. Underpaid, virtually invisible, the singers continue to travel their gospel highway, sustained by the not altogether satisfying recognition that they provide the roots for most of contemporary rock and soul. This gospel highway is a two-way street, with the world quite willing to meet the singers, and the singers increasingly disposed to salute the world. The secularization of gospel habits is a far richer and more complicated matter than the gospel devices—falsetto whoops, growls and simulated ecstasy—that have become the commonplaces of the musical marketplace.

Gospel's proper home is the black folk church, and its most institutionalized guardian the black preacher. The music's theatrical nature has one origin in the preacher's showmanship. As the ethos dictates that he must be "called" and "sent," so the dictates of the spirit will color his preaching, causing him to growl, moan, chant and even sing his words, to move about freely, to run, to crawl, to shout—in a word, to "clown." Clowning, as the description of showmanship, is an ambivalent term among gospel singers. Everyone knows it's wrong to put on, yet every singer or preacher knows it is necessary and wellnigh universal.

Preachers were the best-selling religious artists of the 1920s. Their sermons were punctuated by ecstatic outbursts from a few members of the congregation imported for the recording session—one wonders how these saints must have felt, waiting in those old Okeh and Columbia studios while the blues singers and vaudevillians took their turn to record. The sermons themselves were often on secular topics, or inspired by secular, i.e., blues, tunes. For example, the Rev. J. M. Gates could ignore the witty double-entendres of Thomas A. Dorsey's "It's Tight Like That" and use the phrase to describe conditions during the Depression: "Times are tight but it's going to be tighter than that." One of his best-selling records, "Dead Cat on the Line" derived from a folk saying, common to black and white Southerners, "If a child don't favor his father some way, there's a dead cat on the line." Gates's record is at once a self-righteous castigation of adultery and illegitimacy, a subversive comment on the usual canonization of mother, and something bordering on risqué comedy. Church audiences still appreciate comparable displays of wit. Such popular preachers as the Rev. C. L. Franklin, the Rev. W. Leo Daniels or the Rev. Johnny Jones will take the titles of currently popular tunes—e.g., "Who's Making Love to Your Old Lady While You're Out Making Love?"—and convert them into spiritual sentiments. Audiences applaud the bravado involved in these hairbreadth escapes from the devil's clutches.

On a less obvious level, there is a worldly cast to many gospel sermons simply because American evangelism is thoroughly infused with materialistic and pragmatic perspectives. In good empirical tradition, American evangelicals expect their signs and wonders to be visible, manifested by cures from illnesses and relief from financial burdens. This abandonment of the transcendent for the transparent can make for the expressive art of a Dorothy Love Coates singing "When I was down and out, you know I didn't have a dime," or for the startling display of a middle-class white charismatic confessing on TV's *700 Club* that her husband is unfaithful and being subsequently slain in the spirit as a Catholic

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priest anoints her with oil. But the underlying theme—God helps his saints in this world—already focuses on the secular as the realm of significant action.

Gospel music came into prominence in the 1930s largely due to the promotional efforts of Dorsey, a former blues singer and composer, who brought into the church a jazz bounce that tempered the more special yet also more strident sanctified rhythms. By 1938, Sister Rosetta Tharpe had taken his "Hide Me in Thy Bosom" and neutered its religious sentiments in a version called "Rock Me" that became a national "race records" hit.

Dorsey was obviously a child of the blues. So too, in his own way, was the Rev. W. Herbert Brewster, a Memphis Baptist minister—to my mind the finest of all modern gospel composers—who had been friendly with W. C. Handy. Brewster's early tunes emphasized 16-bar blues that began in the traditional, slow-paced manner of the eighteenth-century Dr. Watts hymns, and invariably, in an ecumenical gesture, shifted from verses sung to no beat to choruses that rocked in sanctified fashion: Brewster's tunes, especially as arranged in the 1940s and 1950s by Clara Ward, Marion Williams and Mahalia Jackson, grew even more rhythmically adventurous. He cultivated waltz rhythms and multiple changes in tempo, the beat accelerating even as the lyrics turned simpler: "Weeping May Endure for a Night" begins with a lyric as prolix as an eighteenth-century hymn and culminates in the repeated shout, "He'll make it all right, all right, all right."

By the 1940s, gospel music began to surface in secular music settings, e.g., New York's Café Society Downtown, where Rosetta Tharpe, the Dixie Hummingbirds and the Golden Gates appeared. Even before the postwar boom in recordings, gospel groups began to pack large churches, halls and stadiums. Art Rupp, founder of Specialty Records, says that by the mid-1940s he began to notice his leading blues singers sneaking around to gospel concerts for inspiration. The pre-eminent female blues singer of this era was Dinah Washington, quondam lead of the Sallie Martin Singers. Washington was the first major black popular star to be totally unembarrassed in her exploitation of her gospel roots. Characteristically, with the years, she would color her phrasing with ironic innuendoes, as if every other phrase was in double quotes. Actually, the shift from choir soloist to Evil Gal or from bawdy to sublime has its gospel analogues, as can be witnessed by anyone who has observed the sensual flirtations with their audiences of women singers like Mahalia Jackson, Marion Williams or Inez Andrews. Incidentally, until the arrival of Ray Charles, Dinah Washington was the only nongospel singer I saw who could command an Apollo Theater audience with the know-how of a gospel trouper.

The 1940s also expanded gospel's range to include specifically political issues, due in part to the war and in part to the early stirrings of freedom movements. So the Golden Gates recorded attacks on segregation, as well as "Stalin Wasn't Stalling," a kind of Popular Front anthem; the disc jockey Otis Jackson composed a paean to President Roosevelt—"Tell me why you like Roosevelt, he was no kin . . . he gave me a job and a comfortable home"—as well as "Sure Do Need Him Now," a listing of prominent black historical figures from King Solomon to George Washington Carver. The Reverend Brewster, already involved in civil rights programs, began composing tunes like "Surely God Is Able (to carry you through)" or "I'm Climbing Higher and Higher (and I won't come down)" that were meant to function as both gospel songs and codified political statements.

In 1946, one of the most interesting mergers of gospel and politics occurred in New York City at a concert headlined by Paul Robeson, in honor of the left-wing Harlem Congressman Benjamin Davis, and featuring the neo-jubilee quartet, the Harmonizing Four of Richmond, Virginia; Sister Rosa Shaw, one of the most daring if vocally limited improvisers in gospel history; the Two Gospel Keys, my own favorites of the so-called "down-home" singers; a youthful quartet that included the brothers of James Baldwin, and an adolescent Clyde McPhatter. For many reasons, relating as much to politics as to the availability of talent, such a concert would be impossible today.

After 1945, with the advent of the small independent companies—Savoy, Apollo, Gotham, Peacock, Specialty, Nashboro, etc.—gospel singers became recording stars. The tremendous increase in exposure and distribution facilitated gospel's new leap to prominence. During the next few years, groups like the Ward Singers, Davis Sisters, Roberta Martin Singers and Original Gospel Harmonettes, and quartets like the Soul Stirrers, Pilgrim Travelers, Dixie Hummingbirds and Five Blind Boys, to mention only the most popular acts, were met on the gospel highway by scores of gifted soloists and groups. These artists were largely sustained by their love of the music—even at gospel's peak, the average member of a big-name group was lucky to clear $5,000 a year. Despite inflation, this figure is not considerably larger today, although the segregated hotels and facilities that made life so unpleasant on the 1940s and 1950s gospel highway are now gone.

By the early 1950s, it was clear that the best gospel singers had vocal and performing styles quite as distinctive as any found among jazz or blues vocalists. They also exhibited an infectious showmanship, a newer form of "clowning," that involved walking, running or crawling up church aisles, strutting and dancing with uninhibited gusto and dramatic pantomimes: "painting a picture" to "tell a story."

The only gospel singer with whom white America was familiar during the 1950s was Mahalia Jackson. And although Jackson continued to shout her home congregation with classic versions of Brewster tunes like "Move on Up a Little Higher" and "How I Got Over," she made her mark with white audiences and critics, performing such uneventful material as "When the Saints Go Marching In" or "The Lord's Prayer." Yet gospel was having an oblique influence on general audiences. This came through in the mimicry of gospel devices by the seminal singers in rock-and-roll.

With the exception of Chuck Berry and Fats Domino, there is scarcely a pioneer rock-and-roll singer who didn't owe his stuff to the great gospel lead singers. These connections are very specific, though seldom noted, and a source of frequent discontent to the singers who can hardly accuse another person of plagiarism simply because he mimics their characteristic phrasing or vocal coloration. Sam Cooke, the successor to R. H. Harris with the Soul Stirrers, carried his own style and Harris's into rock-and-roll and had a

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singular influence on almost all subsequent soul crooners. Little Richard derived his falsetto whoops and growling syncopations, as well as his Suzy-Qs and hip-struts, from Marion Williams; and through Little Richard, his fellow Georgians James Brown and Otis Redding absorbed Williams's habits of rhythmic freedom and staccato word repetitions. The Isely Brothers' "Shout" was a conscious homage, again to Marion Williams, and contained an instrumental passage by the Apollo Theater's resident gospel organist, Prof. Herman Stevens. Even B. B. King attempted a more florid approach than previous blues singers, in his case, colored largely by the example of the Rev. Sam McCrary of the Fairfield Four. Wilson Pickett, in soul as earlier in gospel, is clearly indebted to the shouting vocal style and frenetic choreography of the Rev. Julius Cheeks. By the late 1950s, rhythm-and-blues singers had expropriated the styles of many prominent gospel leads.

In a more tepid fashion, white singers followed suit. Elvis Presley, for one, had attended the Reverend Brewster's church in Memphis; even before this he had listened to the popular records by Sister Rosetta Tharpe accompanied by Sammy Price's boogie-woogie trio which captivated both black and white Southerners.

How did gospel singers respond to this secularization of their sound? Not surprisingly, with confusion. The Gospel All Stars turned Ray Charles's "Hallelujah I Love Her So" into "That's Why I Love Him So." The Davis Sisters had a hit in "There's a Tree on Each Side of the River" with its innovative "ooh-wah" chorus; when they followed up with a tune that incorporated "she-bop-a-she-bop," the church audiences abandoned them. On the other hand, James Cleveland has been the biggest gospel star since 1960. His first hit, "The Love of God," was also the first gospel choir adaptation of a quasi-pop ballad. In the late 1970s, Cleveland had big hits with gospel adaptations of pop ballads like "You're the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me" and "I Write the Songs," a modern variant, if you will, of the old preacher ploy of one-upping the world with its own sentiments.

The civil rights movement was frequently accompanied by gospel songs, their latent content now made manifest. But a less happy trend was the popularity in the 1960s of so-called "message" songs. Gospel singers performed them, in hopes that the religiously neutral messages might remove the sting of their more sanctified performances. Yet, when one thinks of message tunes like the Staple Singers' "Respect Yourself" with its inane couplet—"Keep talking 'bout the President, won't stop air pollution/Put your hand on your mouth when you cough, that'll help the solution"—the descent in such tunes from the Reverend Brewster's apocalyptic imagery becomes the musical equivalent of the constricting of revolutionary ardor to reformist smugness.

Well into the mid-1970s, gospel leads set the standards for soul and pop singers. Melismatics, falsetto shrieks, growls, simulated ecstasy became commonplace devices. The most important soul singer, Aretha Franklin, drew on several sources—Mahalia Jackson, Jacqui Verdell, Mavis Staples—though her prime influence has always been Clara Ward whose resonant moan continues to inform her style. Even Donna Summer hails Mahalia Jackson as her inspiration—though you couldn't prove it by me.

In 1969, the first and only gospel record to hit the top ten was released—the Edwin Hawkins Singers' "O Happy Day." With this record, the dominance of the so-called "contemporary" or "progressive" choir sound was assured. Fifties-style gospel did not disappear, but now found itself regarded as dated. The eclecticism of "contemporary gospel" derives from several sources: the academic training of many young choir directors, the example of the highly complex recording techniques of a Stevie Wonder or Michael Jackson and the simple financial lure. Although at this moment most gospel singers are as badly off as ever, the four or five top names are charging between $5,000 and $10,000 per concert. A typical contemporary choir recording may be all over the musical terrain: with melodies that evoke soul ballads, high-church anthems and themes out of Wagner or Brahms, with harmonies that give the contemporary part singer the pleasure of singing augmented fifths and diminished sevenths, with rhythms that merge church and disco and polyrhythms supplied by cantilevered and intersecting choral lines, as well as piano, organ, rhythm instruments and even synthesizers. The results are seldom successful. Yet the boldness of the attempt is in that gospel tradition that has always accommodated daring improvisations and vocal risks.

Gospel choir members are extravagant dancers in the spirit; frequently an entire choir will dance and the ensuing displays, idiosyncratic and self-absorbed, put to shame the secularized Corybants of most discos. And surely, if these ambitious choir directors had access to rock recording budgets, the results would be happier. The average gospel album is recorded in four to six hours, with budgets below $5,000. Although young people's choirs are training young musicians to provide self-contained recording ensembles, in many cases the rule is, as a witty disc jockey put it, "We're recording tonight, bring your mother, we heard she plays piano."

Paradoxically, as contemporary gospel choirs sound more and more like worldly music, white pop singers continue to use traditional gospel backups. Post-Beatles rock musicians may have determined to combine all the musical sounds at their disposal; actually they have profited at the expense of almost all the older forms they have exploited. In rock, gospel has been reduced to a vocal coloration, usually in the background, represented by overly fervent, high-pitched singers. Properly, they should call attention to the vocal inadequacies of a Bob Dylan or Paul Simon,

OBSERVATORY HILL

Like prehistoric beasts,
giant sunflowers
stalk the courtyard
of the astrophysics lab.

Perhaps they work
as radar scanners
while they follow the sun,
or split along the center
of their half-domes
like telescope slits.

Since this is autumn,
the leaves are withered—
seeds rain like stars
from the dry flowers.
All earthly explanations
are useless:
I want to believe
the sunflowers
connect the heavens
with all particles
below.

Sue Standing

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but I fear that they wind up sounding naïve and ingenuous, temperamentally limited, unlike the genial parodists they support.

There have been other dubious uses of gospel. Among them there is the current prominence of two white evangelical television programs, the *700 Club* and the *P.T.L. Club*, with their combinations of right-wing politics and the more forbidding forms of American evangelism. Today, despite studio audiences that are usually 99 percent white, they provide the only televised forums for black gospel singers, and a common gospel aspiration is to appear on them, sandwiched between the likes of Anita Bryant and Senator Jesse Helms.

The old gospel sound, however, has not disappeared. Though during the 1970s Mahalia Jackson, Clara Ward, Brother Joe May, Rosetta Tharpe and Alex Bradford all died, there are still many gospel giants around, including such old-timers as Thomas A. Dorsey, the Reverend Brewster, Willie Mae Ford Smith and Sallie Martin. The gospel blues is not an exhausted form; in fact, no living singer is as inventive with blues vocal devices as the gospel singer Marion Williams. There are still down-home, regional artists and virtuoso musicians, including a recent blossoming of saxophonists. John Hammond once said that gospel singers have nine lives—some of the best may seem to have sold out for good, and then manage to reassert their power when one least expects it. The world has come close to defeating gospel music, the bad times swamping the good news, but as a recent gospel hit declared, "I don't feel no ways tired, I've come too far from where I started"; the spirit's still there, the battle isn't over. □

The Book Awards: Who Decides What

HERBERT J. GANS

Some years ago, otherwise knowledgeable observers of the American scene announced that the old barriers between high culture and popular culture had fallen, and that the classless utopia in which people would read both Marcel Proust and Harold Robbins—and dance around the same maypole—had now arrived. Then, however, came the demise of the highbrowish National Book Awards (NBA), the launching of the more popular and more commercial The American Book Awards (TABA), and the battle between the two cultures was once more joined.

NBAs had been given out by well-known literary critics and "serious" authors, while the new TABAs are being chosen by selection committees that include publishers and booksellers, among them representatives of mass-market paperback houses and nation-wide bookstore chains. Some TABAs will be given to paperbacks, cookbooks, volumes of religion/inspiration and other categories of books shunned by the NBA, and the awards themselves will be presented at an Oscar-like ceremony.

Former NBA judges and winners have reacted in predictable fashion. At last count, more than forty had announced a boycott of TABA, including Norman Mailer, Philip Roth and William Styron. Although all three have been nominated for TABAs, they feel that the new awards are blighted by "commercial and public relations concerns that should have little to do with the recognition of literary merit." According to Roger Straus and Aaron Asher, of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, TABA is "a popularity contest, another ratification of the best-seller lists." In short, the boycotters are fearful that TABAs will go mainly to popular books and that literary merit as defined by high culture will be overwhelmed by commercial hoopla.

No doubt TABA was invented for commercial reasons, the book industry having belatedly discovered that awards sell books. Nonetheless, the industry made the bad mistake of ignoring the understandable, and quite proper, desire of authors to be judged by their peers, a desire that is probably shared by the authors of best sellers. Even so, TABA is not simply an example of villainous commerce seducing virtuous art. For one thing, almost all the hardbacks and a surprisingly high proportion of the paperbacks nominated for TABAs are the kind of books nominated for NBAs in the past. Also, while the conglomerates which now increasingly dominate the book industry make credible heavies, they are not motivated solely by greed. Conversely, the family-owned publishing firms and the small independent bookstores of old were not exactly nonprofit enterprises, and even "serious" authors like to earn money from their books.

Furthermore, in some not very visible quarters, those old NBAs were themselves thought to be crassly commercial. Many scholars, for example, viewed the NBA judges as predominantly middlebrow, giving prizes to middlebrow books by freelance writers, journalists and professional popularizers while ignoring the works of the truly serious, the academics. The scholars' reaction may have stemmed also from the fact that they write largely for their fellow experts, whereas authors favored by NBA were typically addressing "the general reader," i.e., the college-educated amateur. By the same token, perhaps NBA supporters disdain TABA in part because it will reward some authors writing for high school graduates and yet more poorly educated book buyers.

Probable educational snobbery aside, the underlying issue is who gets to define literary merit, and no doubt every author, critic, publisher, bookseller—and reader—would like that right, preferably as a monopoly. As long as American society continues to span a range of high, middle and low culture, and as long as authors, critics and other cultural experts see literary merit differently from cultural amateurs—such as some publishers and many readers—agreement on a single definition of quality is neither feasible nor desirable. Instead, there will and should be many definitions, as well as several sets of annual book awards based on varying definitions.

To be practical, one might start with three sets of awards, one predominantly for books best expressing mass standards of literary merit, another for so-called trade books reflecting "class" standards and one for books meeting

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scholarly notions of merit. If the book industry continues to support and control TABA, perhaps P.E.N., the Authors Guild and like-minded others can revive an author-dominated NBA, while scholarly organizations and university presses could join to establish the Scholarly Book Awards (SBAs).

Of course, the prizes for "mass" books are likely to be generous, and someday soon the ceremonies can be expected to appear on network television, whereas the "class" book awards will be modest, and the presentation is apt to be heard only on public radio. (Scholars may have to be satisfied with a scroll and an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.) Pluralism is never quite egalitarian, however. Nor would it defuse the cultural class conflict, since awards organizers, judges and nominees will (and should) continue to snipe at one another. But perhaps my proposal will discourage authors and others from making insulting remarks about the literary tastes of the already distressingly small number of people wno now read books. □

THOMAS POWERS

Giving literary prizes is hard to do, because, unlike mountains, literary merit is not easily measured. There one is Everest, and that is that. The qualities of books are more elusive. A lot of them look promising in the first year of life, but after that the mortality rate is staggering. The great libraries are like mausoleums, their shelves lined with the unreadable and the unread. Pretty much everyone knows this, and treats literary prizes accordingly—as a mark of respect, a gesture of affection, a sign there is something here worth looking into.

But sometimes the giving of prizes attempts to force the issue. A clique may carry the day for one of its own, or a prize may serve as a stick in the eye of authority, or a neglected writer may be tardily recognized with an award for a book that is far from his best work. The ideal is justice—the disinterested recognition of quality—but the twin facts that merit is arguable and prizes

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Norman Birnbaum, Blair Clark, Ramsey Clark, Fred Cook, Terrence Des Pres, E.L. Doctorow, Richard Falk, Jules Feiffer, Tom Ferguson & Joel Rogers, Frances FitzGerald, James Goodman & Dorothy Samuels, Philip Green, Christopher Hitchens, Leonard Kriegel, Robert Lekachman, Penny Lernoux, Sanford Levinson, Carey McWilliams, Aryeh Neier, Marcel Ophuls, Nora Sayre, Robert Sherrill, Calvin Trillin, Kurt Vonnegut, Alan Wolfe **write it.**

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useful mean that strict justice will sometimes be violated.

The history of prizes is littered with scandals of precisely this sort—choices which are tendentious, choices which are low and self-seeking, choices which are high-minded attempts to coax the public in some worthy direction, choices which are just plain dumb. I can't think of a year when the Nobel Prizes, the Pulitzers and the National Book Awards didn't provoke grumbling, walkouts, lofty sniffings of disdain, bleats of injury, dark hints of a fix. Some of these disputes involved matters of substance; some were just silly. Their frequency, and their generally prissy, hectoring tone, strike me as good arguments for not getting unduly worked up about who gets what for what.

But that is only another way of saying it would be nice if the problem would go away. The reasons it won't are implicit in the perennial controversy over the National Book Awards, which succumbed to weariness and accumulated spleen last year, and have now been gaudily reincarnated, controversy intact, as The American Book Awards. The heart of the problem is the process for choosing winners. If the choice were left to an academy of musty old men no one would worry about the results. Most prizes are granted by some such body—self-selected, unrepresentative, often with an obvious ax to grind.

The trouble begins with the attempt to claim genuine authority for the prize-giving deliberative body. The NBA gave this job to small, distinguished juries which presumably knew something about the work they were called upon to judge. This made sense in theory, but often foundered in fact because the jurors were judging not only their peers but their friends, protégés and rivals. TABA has tried to correct for coziness by leaving the final choice to a much broader jury of 2,000—divided equally among writers, editors, librarians and booksellers—who can be counted on to be serious and disinterested, but can hardly be expected to have read, or even hefted, all the books nominated in twenty-one different categories for a total of thirty-two prizes.

It seems the jury is to operate on a kind of honor system. Jurors are chosen at least in part for their expertise, but then are free to vote in any category they think themselves qualified to judge. A science writer, if he's of a mind, can also vote for the best jacket design (hardcover), or first novel, or work of religion/inspiration. With the ballot in front of him the temptation will be great to register an opinion in more categories than strict justice would allow, trusting to vague report, an hour's half-remembered browse in a bookstore, frank prejudice, a notion that so-and-so is deserving—opinions, in short, plucked from the ether. There are two things that might be said about TABA's jury system. One is that its claim of authority will hardly withstand serious scrutiny. The second is that it will probably work at least as well as its immediate predecessor, and perhaps better, making up in good will what it lacks in rigor.

But what does all this have to do with writers? With luck, not much. The first thing any serious writer must learn to live with is the probability that no one is paying attention. Even a writer's closest friends may read only a fraction of what he writes, and their interest in his chosen subject may be faint or uninformed. When the writer himself may only dimly perceive what he is about, and is still groping for the insight that will give coherence to his concerns, it is hardly likely the world will follow his

GEOLOGICAL FAULTS

And other wonders
Invade my fossil dreams.
He and I stand
On the Columbia Ice Cap
Canadian tourist trap
Testing the queer blue ice
The kind they say "runs deep"
Miles and miles

Solid it held us up
Above the hot dog concession
And tramway, supporting
Hundreds of visitors daily
And Sonja Henie
For years.

Nobody could guess
The adjoining crevasses would swallow
The whole Indian Trading Post.
The children and I
Wear our Saskatchewan mittens,
Hold our palms up bravely
As we slip through
Caverns of ice
Our costume skirts
Tilted upward
Like broken umbrellas.

Now on the sunless side of the canyon
I fly alone on my home-made mechanism,
A downy giant bat,
Frightening lizards
Who scuttle under cold rock
Afraid of the woman
Who fell from the sky.

I soar, dive, touch bottom,
Then rise again into cobalt blue.
Around my webbed wings
Whirls a lasso of buzzards,
Moving soundlessly
Waiting for
The thawed wax,
The faulty bolt,
The broken wing.

Barbara Unger

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work with that minuteness usually reserved for the eminent dead.

The world's view of the writer, then, and the writer's view of himself are bound to be in conflict, which means the writer's equilibrium is perpetually in jeopardy. He must somehow learn simultaneously to believe in himself, to possess a decent respect for the opinions of mankind and to ignore the fact that the world ignores him, all without succumbing either to self-pity or megalomania. Clearly this is something of a high-wire act, the more demanding for being conducted without an audience. One imagines that writers are dropping all around us, if we but knew—stumbling over the difficulty of doing work of quality, while the world is preoccupied with the meretricious, the inflated, the shrill, the blatant and the dim. If a writer once begins to dwell on what the world perversely prefers to him, he is finished. His only safety is in sticking to what he does, in the way it seems good to him to do it, and letting the world go hang.

This is hard enough under the best of circumstances. Literary prizes and awards only complicate matters by implicitly shifting attention from the work to its reception. The winners, one imagines, are desperate with their balancing poles—puzzled, embarrassed, pleased, inwardly doubting if the real point has been grasped, outwardly determined to get through the awful momentary glare without some graceless lapse. In a sense, one imagines, every prize is refused, sometimes publicly, as Sartre refused the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1964; more often privately. A prize represents an attempt to say what a book, or a lifetime in literature, *is*. What serious writer would surrender such a judgment to others? This is his life, his work. The writer concedes autonomy to his audience: it is free to like, to dislike, to pass over. But the judgment that matters is the writer's own, and it would hardly be fair to insist he make it final while there is yet time.

If there were a pressing need for an authoritative group of literary prizes, rigorously chosen, the controversy over TABA would make sense. It would make even better sense to let TABA do as it liked, and start from scratch. But why should we feel there is any such need? What purpose would a genuinely grand prize serve? Picking the "best" of anything is a narrowing activity, out of sympathy with the aims of literature. One can imagine a "best" squash racket—strongest, lightest, springiest. But what is to be gained by attempting to identify the "best" biography, or the "best" work of general nonfiction? The tension in literature does not come from an imagined competition between authors but from the engagement of a book with its subject.

If TABA had been organized by Solomon the whole undertaking would still be peripheral to the making of books. The fact that it has been organized with a frank eye to commerce only makes its pretensions irritating. But this does not qualify as a sudden appearance of the Philistines within the city gates, and it is hard for me to see why it requires a call to arms. TABA was generously, if not wisely, conceived. There is no reason to doubt the good faith of the jurors. Why, then, the haste to kill the infant in its crib? Time can be counted on to settle a problem of this sort. If TABA's choices are consistently good over time the prizes will acquire the value inherent in a gesture of recognition; and if not, not. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

The Watcher in the Woods
Incorrigible
On Company Business

As of this writing, mid-April, movie openings in New York are going through what Mr. Carter's advisers would call a mild and, they hope, brief recession. The spring holidays are over, the students are back in their schools, the Oscars have been distributed on schedule and according to predictions, and producers with important films up their sleeves are not rushing to market. Here's what I found.

The Watcher in the Woods comes from Walt Disney Productions, an attribution that always makes me start. I keep forgetting that the Disney people are still out there, hard at their work of showing how really nice everyone is. Everyone in *The Watcher* meets the Disney test for decency, but even so I would not recommend it for impressionable children. It is being called a ghost story and it contains ingredients common to that genre: malevolent lightning bolts, inexplicably violent winds, shattering glass, sinister boscage, an isolated house full of mirrors that do not always reflect what confronts them, a child who speaks in a voice not her own, etc.

However, it is not an authentic tale of spooks but rather an exercise in science fiction. It concerns a slippage of the fourth dimensional continuum, the sort of thing that prospective voyagers into areas adjacent to the time-space interface learn in basic training to guard against, lest they find themselves in limbo. But you must await the highly gratifying, if not exactly limpid, denouement for more details on that.

The owner of the large English country house is Mrs. Aylwood, whose teenage daughter, many years ago, walked into the woods one day and was never seen again. Her tenants are an American family named Curtis: father, mother and two splendid daughters who are the particular recipients of strange portents. The mother is played by Carroll Baker, the bereaved property owner by Bette Davis, and it is a lesson in craftsmanship to observe how two good actresses can knock some sense into what is otherwise a flesh-and-blood Silly Symphony. It was principally to see Davis exert her spell again that I went to the picture; she has it still. Nor does Baker let herself be defeated by her surroundings, though she must play the uncomprehending parent in one of those yarns that give all the insight to the young.

The film comes complete with a hard-faced recluse, a simpleton who lurks about a ruined chapel, a stalwart countrywoman with something on her mind, and her son, who is as splendid as the Curtis girls and falls into a summer romance with the older of them. It is hard to believe that this sort of thing still goes on, and I confess to having been beguiled by the fact that it does. And of course Bette Davis is frequently available to demonstrate how one makes bricks without straw. John Hough, who directed the movie, handled the job as though he were pulling taffy—the idea is to move briskly and not get stuck in the stuff.

As a switch from whimsy there is tomfoolery to be had under the auspices of Jean-Paul Belmondo. At the beginning, some twenty years ago, Belmondo showed signs of becoming an important actor; instead, he settled for being a gay blade. It is a quick road to popularity,

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but treacherous because, year by year, it becomes harder to keep in trim. Belmondo has managed it better than most—he is now 47 and can still light up like a prowl car—but the strain shows. In *Incorrigible*, an ostensibly comic caper directed by Philippe de Broca, it shows in excessive displays of effervescence. From opening shot to closing credits, Belmondo is in violent motion, beaming at the camera, flinging himself from café to boudoir to the Quai d'Orsay, assuming peculiar accents and eccentric dress, cheering his colleagues on to new feats of imprudence. He reminds me of one of those elderly gents who insist on taking the stairs two steps at a time; he looks winded and worried.

Of course, being no fool, he may be working that hard and looking that concerned because he mistrusts the vehicle in which he finds himself. As a funny crime yarn, *Incorrigible* leaves almost everything to be desired—most noticeably, it confuses nonsense with humor. Belmondo plays opposite Genevieve Bujold, an actress with a feeling for style and a nice way with mischief. They are well matched and, given the right script, could have danced their way through a pleasantly duplicitous romance. The whole cast is much too good for the work it was given, and I became oppressed by the notion that what it was expressing was mainly self-disgust—what a troupe of American Indians might feel while performing ceremonial dances on the patio of an Arizona motel.

For *Incorrigible* is tourist bait as surely as are the night spots around the Place Pigalle. Of course, the French are old hands at tourism for export, turning out entertainments that combine comedy with Gallic charm and views of their most celebrated public monuments. But that sort of thing can be carried too far, and if Belmondo isn't careful he will begin to seem more a trademark than a performer—like Robert Morley prancing around the Tower of London on behalf of British Airways.

What with *The Trials of Alger Hiss*, *The War at Home*, *The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover* (a mishap, that one), the current *On Company Business* and *We Are the Guinea Pigs* (about the survivors, so to speak, of Three Mile Island) in the offing, political documentaries are flourishing just now. If, as I hope, they also flourish at the box office, it would be a sign that an anxious citizenry is concerned to discover how it came to the pass in which it now finds itself.

The company business considered in the present film (shown recently at the Public Theater in New York) is that of the Central Intelligence Agency, but the title also suggests—what is undoubtedly true—that the Agency serves not only Government policy but also corporate interest; indeed, it suggests that, practically speaking, they are the same thing. *On Company Business* covers the intercontinental subversions of the C.I.A. from just after World War II until now. It points out that the Agency handled the underside of a national strategy whose visible part was the Marshall Plan. The war had left a vacuum, economic and political, in Europe and we had to move into it before the Russians got there—using money where possible and secret agents when money wouldn't do the trick.

Like its predecessors, *On Company Business* combines historical footage with recent interviews obtained from people who participated in making the history. The stage is enormous and the witnesses are many, some famous, others until now obscure. Because of its range, the picture is not as sharply focused as the ones on Alger Hiss and the antiwar struggles at Madison, Wisconsin. It is therefore less intensely dramatic. It is also more chilling.

It says, in effect, that it is absurd to demand or expect civilized behavior on the part of an Agency whose mission is in large part to gain for the United States power and influence abroad that it cannot achieve by decent means. And those in the film who cry out most indignantly against the covert projects of the C.I.A. (among these the most prominent are Philip Agee, Victor Marchetti and John Stockwell) echo one another with the assertion that the Agency, far from being out of control, performs faithfully what, however indirectly, it is told to do. David Atlee Phillips makes the point efficiently in an opening scene: if righteousness prevailed, he says, and the C.I.A. were abolished, the man in the Oval Office, whoever that might be, would immediately form his own secret band for his own secret purposes, calling it something like the Plumbers.

Phillips, formerly head of Latin American operations, appears often in the film to scoff at virtue. He is not a pleasant man, but on the evidence available it is hard to prove him excessively cynical.

A problem with the picture is that some of the most eloquent and seemingly best-informed witnesses for the prosecution are men who have their own problems with the C.I.A. They sound truthful, but by now they have rehearsed their stories many times. A way around that problem is to agree that their conclusions are convincing, whatever reliance one cares to place on their detailed accusations. But then one is left with their conclusion, which is that the C.I.A. will neither reform nor wither away.

From witnesses on the other side, men like William Colby and Richard Helms, one hardly expects much in the way of truth—rather, one expects self-righteous evasion, as from any high priest under pressure. Colby is icy; Helms, insulting. I don't know which manner is more abrasive, and comfort myself by remembering that they too are only hired guns.

Having seen *On Company Business*, the best one can hope is that someday we may have the luck, if not the sense, to elect a President whose grasp of history and equating of means to ends will counsel him to restrain the C.I.A. It is not a thought that conveys immediate comfort. The film was produced by Howard Dratch and Allan Francovich; it was directed by Francovich. □

THEATER

HAROLD CLURMAN

Molly McGuire

The theater originated in the streets, fields, marketplaces, taverns and community fairs—the meeting places of ordinary people. It may be that to renew its authenticity, vigor and validity, the theater may have to return to the streets. It is inescapable that much of what we call theater has lost its essential vitality.

The other evening, I attended a performance of the New York Street Theater Caravan. (See Dedra Hauser, "Art and Agitprop," *The Nation*, April 5.) It took place in a gymnasiumlike space connected with St. Peter's Church on West 20th Street. For most of the past ten years, however, the company has been appearing in the streets. It has

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traveled thousands of miles to the coal towns of Appalachia, to the textile mills of North and South Carolina, to poor districts in Alabama and Mississippi. It has performed in factories, in union halls, on Indian reservations, in migrant shacks and in prisons. To raise funds, it has toured many prestigious European playhouses. The caravan, in short, touches base.

The play I saw at St. Peter's Church is called *Molly McGuire*, written and staged by Marketa Kimbrell, the company's artistic director. The Molly McGuires were the militant anthracite miners of Pennsylvania who formed the Workmen's Benevolent Association there. They were bent on forming a union to win better pay and to improve the cruel working conditions in which their employers had them labor in the mid-nineteenth century. The mine owners hired Pinkerton detectives to root out the strike leaders and their adherents. This led to counterviolence. A number of those accused of crimes—including murder—were hanged in 1877. Eugene Debs, years later, spoke of "the Mollies" as "the first martyrs of American labor." The movement failed, but a decade after its extinction, mining was organized by the Knights of Labor, who brought efficient discipline into the coal pits.

The Molly McGuires were descended from Irish Catholics who had emigrated to the United States to escape the potato famine of the 1840s and the terrible poverty and unspeakable misery they suffered at the hands of English landowners. From the ranks of disabled mine workers arose a band of minstrels who tramped from town to town spreading news through dance and song. The minstrels told stories of the past. Their ballads were a chronicle of mining disasters, a reflection of the miners' experiences and a consolation for strikers whose life in the mines was as wretched as that of their ancestors who had worked the land.

The material is bleak. The first part of the caravan's *Molly McGuire* pictures the sufferings of the Irish peasants under the Cromwellian lords and settlers, the hopeless outbursts of rebellion, the heartless crushing of any attempts to alleviate the situation. This is followed by an incisive sketch of the travail of the miners: their living conditions and their efforts at liberation which brought on the hangings.

One might suppose that such sources for a show would not only be depressing but have little value except as propaganda. The contrary is true. The caravan's *Molly McGuire* is entertaining. In fact, it is positively exhilarating. There is a paradox in this, a paradox which reaches to the core of drama.

Coleridge long ago said about drama that "there ought never to be more pain than is compatible with co-existing pleasure, and . . . amply repaid by thought." There is not much thought in *Molly McGuire*, though its various episodes are symbols which should lead to reflection (and perhaps to action) through a stirring of the imagination.

Since street theater allows for little realism in setting and props, everything here is performed in a calculated rough-and-tumble (or seemingly improvisatory) manner with what bare means are available. This style induces us to gather, as do pregnant metaphors, far more than what is commonly used to convey meaning.

The actors chant, dance, mime and play music on the odd utensil. They "die" and arise in open view. They play heroes, victims and villains in turn, change from one to the other before our eyes without pretending to verisimilitude. We not only understand but feel the significance of what we see, and we are aroused to compassion while we enjoy the ingenuity of the headlong fancy enacted. The players work hard; they have strong bodies, and they disport themselves with extraordinary prowess, ardor and commitment as well as gusto and humor.

All is suggestion and everything real. The contradiction between the nature of the content and the joyous mode of communication is reconciled. This transformation is a paradigm of theater—and a happy event.

Just as the Greek and early Christian theaters were based on racial and community myths, so our street theater is sustained by the more or less American labor myth of the Molly McGuires. The caravan brings us back to the roots of theatrical expression and significance. The company's work shows us how the theater of the masses was once also the vehicle and inspiration of religious festivals and faith.

If you are not immediately able to see *Molly McGuire* or other of the caravan's presentations, you may catch them on their return, or elsewhere in their widespread wanderings through the country. □

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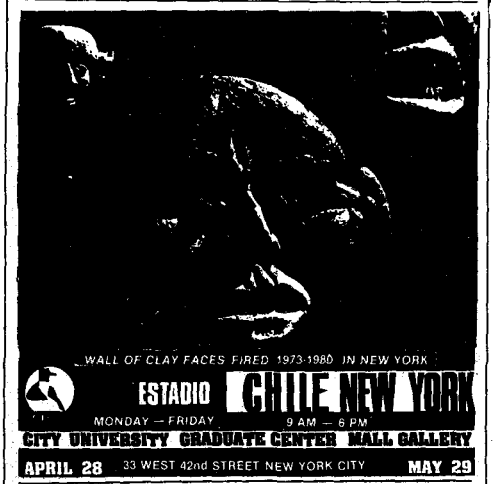
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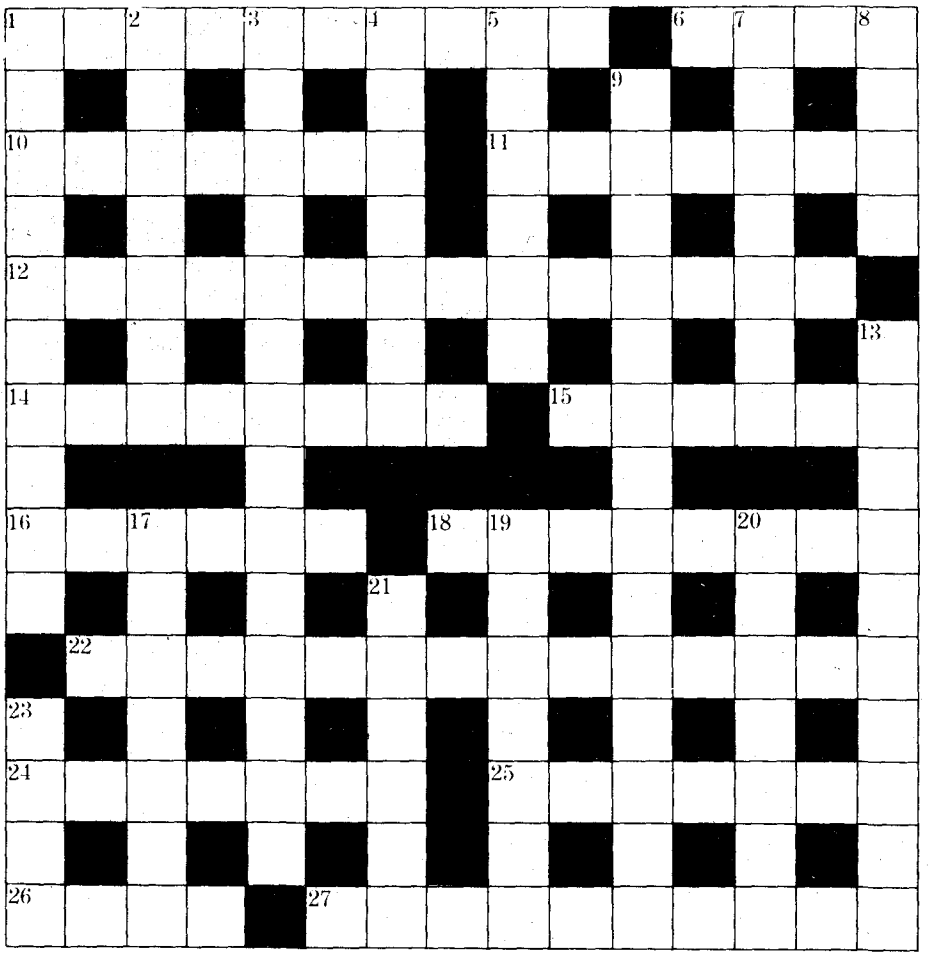
Crossword Puzzle No. 1820

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 6 A high-level government job, involving some paper work? (March is the usual time for it.) (10,4)
10 Would one say he's in the skin game? (7)
11 Does one test watches? Quite the contrary! (7)
12 Twelve people might be expected to place a composer in the return act. (6,1,7)
14 Pitch old-fashioned woo where there's no winner? No good unless you're collared! (8)
15 Don't go first, but look back in the stream. (6)
16 Only slightly changed, heavy, around fifty, looking like a French composer. (6)
18 If I were this man, I might wager it could be a criminal offense. (8)
22 How one sets his watch in flying from NYC to LA, occasionally. (4,4,2,4)
24 They're reputedly good at hunting for something in dorms, perhaps. (7)
25 Things are left to him, with one part of the journey a good driving-place. (7)
26 Seers have nothing but affirmative votes, by the sound of it. (4)
27 Women's wear goes with lots of things, commonly.(Seriously, you might get down to them!) (5,5)

DOWN

1 and 23 Ankle-deep waders shouldn't complain of it. (5,2,3,4)
2 Such places as Baden-Baden have what might be an annoying habit of being associated with palsy. (7)
3 Feeling like a Commander? (One might have learned it in English class.) (10,4)
4 Refuse to dress on time. (7)
5 A bird thus rises to its potential victim. (6)
7 A sort of illusion met on coming out of a coal-pit explosion? (7)
8 It might be legally wrong to come up with a translation. (4)
9 Fish isn't really a thing to ponder over. (4,3,7)
13 Such people might show off, and sort of regress about the funny fellow. (10)
17 I might say I was from here, but you'd find me a liar! (7)
19 Projects sounding like an old musical group. (7)
20 Not very bright of Amin to have an auricular finish! (7)
21 One who might give you a smack in the face, commonly. (6)
23 See 1 down

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1819

ACROSS: 1 and 6 Rule out of order; 9 Germane; 11, 12 and 13 The Golden Rule; 15 Attested; 16 Hobart; 20 Down-wind; 23 Wick; 25 and 28 Forbidding; 29 Granada; 30 and 24 Elmer Gantry; 31 Resilient. DOWN: 1 Right; 2 Lorient; 3 and 18 Oranges and Lemons; 4 The blues; 5 Faster; 6 Orgy; 7 Dracula; 8 Respected; 14 County Jail; 15 Allowable; 17 Portages; 19 Macadam; 21 Inflate; 22 and 10 Danger signals; 26 Roast; 27 Liar.

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CITIZENS' PARTY
Founding Convention April 11-13, 1980

The Nation.
VOL. I—NO. 1. THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1865.

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